

— US Interference in Pakistan —

JAHANGIR'S

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WORLD TIMES



77 YEARS
OF INDEPENDENCE

Pakistan

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EDITORIAL

National Integration

Since its inception, Pakistan has been mired in many challenges, mainly due to the innumerable internal problems facing the country, including a dwindling economy and terrorism, and the root cause of these problems is the prevalent political instability in the country that has affected every domain of society and has impeded our way towards progress and development. Owing to a weak economy, not only the country has amassed a huge debt burden, but also the poor class of the country has been rendered hapless and left in the lurch to face an unbridled inflation. On the other hand, the resurgence of terrorism has also created an atmosphere of fear and despair in the country, which has dimmed the prospects of foreign investment here. Although it has been more than two decades now that we have been fighting this menace and the Pakistan Army has achieved tremendous success in curtailing it, this monster is again raising its head. And to slay this hydra, the government has announced the launch of Operation Azm-e-Istehkam but that laudable decision has also fallen prey to political interests, as many parties are opposing this proposed operation tooth and nail.

We need to keep in mind that no army or government, no matter how strong it is, can deal with such mighty challenges alone; the success of such endeavours hinges directly on national consensus, complete unity and social cohesion. However, all these much-needed traits are, unfortunately, lacking in today's Pakistan.

No one can deny the fact that political, social, racial and religious differences do exist in every country and in every society because this is what makes a society diverse and inclusive. However, the political leadership of that country, with its strong resolve and indomitable will, as well as political acumen, prevents these differences from growing uncontrollable. Such leadership seeks and promotes unity in diversity, which is indeed the beauty of society. It never allows any kind of distrust and mistrust to become dangerous, as such a situation only leads to chaos and anarchy, which further weakens the society and, therefore, becomes disastrous for the country. In the history of Pakistan, we have seen many instances where the nation stood united in the face of adversity; be it the 1965 war with India, the government's strong response to India's nuclear tests in 1999 or the horrific tragedy at the Army Public School in Peshawar. The nation stood behind its leadership and the politicians too set their differences aside to stand united and in unison with each other.

Today, our politicians need to show that same rapport and camaraderie again. In his address to the first Constituent Assembly on 11th August 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah emphatically stated, "If you ... work together in a spirit that every one of you ... is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make."

This is not the time to do politics. Only then everyone's politics will also be saved when the country is strong and stable. Otherwise, the enemy will be successful in its machinations and conspiracies. It is the vision, wisdom and understanding of our leadership that can take the nation forward. Every obstacle in the way of national integration and consensus should not be dealt with an iron hand. That's the only way to success. Perhaps the need for national integration has not ever been as vital and acute as it has been at any time in the past.



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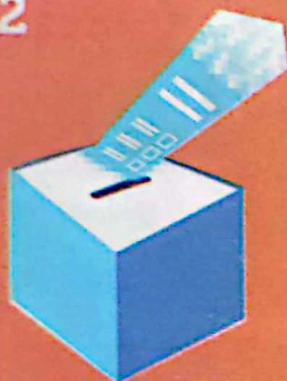
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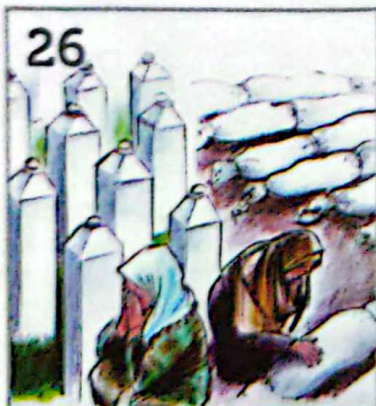
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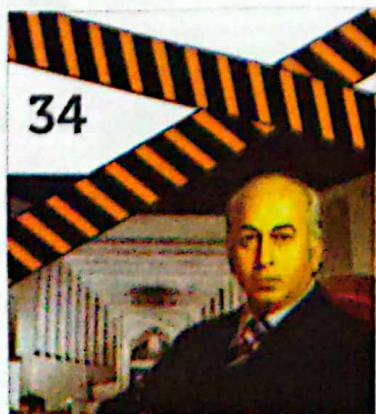
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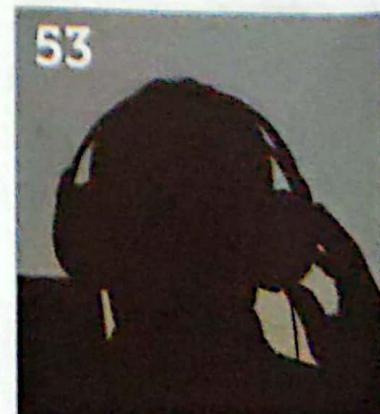


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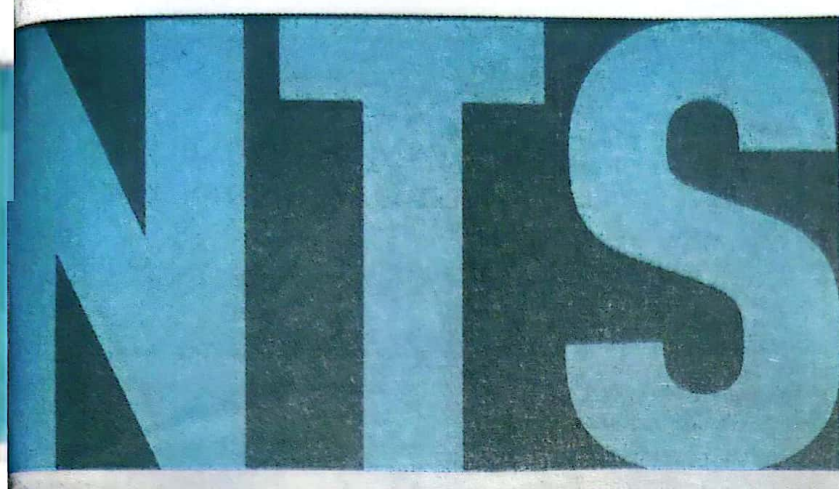
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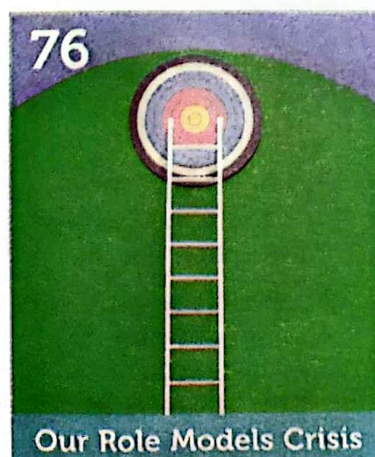
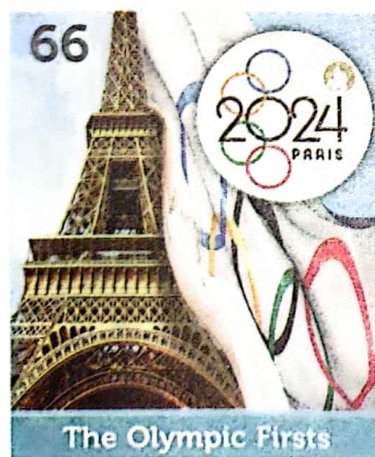
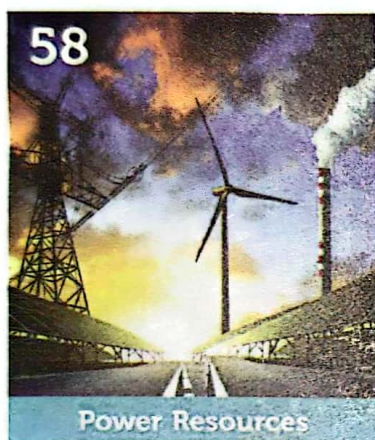
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Notified Espionage



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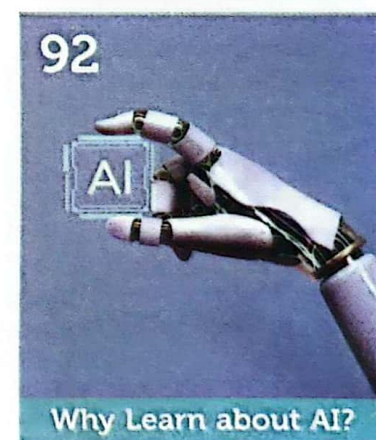
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The Promise of GM Foods

As food systems are decimated by extreme weather patterns all over the globe, a new gene revolution is being heralded as a cure-all for a growing global appetite. This revolution, whereby DNA can be genetically edited without splicing in genes from a separate organism, is bolstering biotech crop industry claims that it can ensure food security for a global population expected to approach 10 billion by 2050. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), research into new rice, maize, wheat, potato and cassava strains, for example, would further help these vital food staples survive extreme weather and "new climate-induced diseases" in a warming world. However, many scientists and environmental campaigners don't agree that GM crops can promise food security or help fight the climate change-induced droughts and floods. They opine that new GMOs will continue to perpetuate an agro-industrial system that bears substantial responsibility for the climate crisis. They suggest that GMOs often involve large-scale monocultures of limited crop varieties that also require great amounts of artificial fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation. It seems that GMOs are promoted by the same agro-industrial giants that also control and profit from a large part of the seed, food, pesticide and fertilizer markets.

Shaista Zohaib, Islamabad

The Menace of Child Labour

Child labour continues to be a widespread issue that deprives children of their fundamental rights to education, health, and a proper childhood. These young individuals, compelled by circumstances beyond their control, end up in environments where exploitation and abuse are common. They spend their days working in fields, factories, or households, while their dreams are overshadowed by the worry of daily survival to make ends meet. It contains the most heinous forms of exploitation, including slavery, forced labour, the use of children in prostitution or illicit activities, and hazardous work that jeopardises their health and safety. These children often endure separation from their families and exposure to severe hazards and are sometimes left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities. However, despite efforts from numerous organisations, governments, and sectors, there is no unified strategy or plan to combat child labour effectively. But, we must understand that we cannot end child labour until every child is in school, and we will not succeed in ensuring every child is in school until we eradicate child labour. To regulate and eventually eradicate child labour, society must play its part. Regardless of cultural norms, we must refrain from becoming desensitised to this issue. By taking action, however small, we can create a ripple effect and build a future where every child can learn, play and reach his full potential.

Asim Majeed, Malakwal

Population Growth & Urbanization

At present, Pakistan is faced with the dual challenge of a burgeoning population and rising urbanization. The National Population & Housing Census 2023 reported that Pakistan's population had reached 241.5 million, with an average yearly increase of 2.55 percent since 2017. The country's population is projected to exceed 300 million by 2050 if current trends persist. The high population growth rate in Pakistan poses several socio-economic issues. The pressure on resources such as water, land and food is immense. Amidst this growing pressure, millions of Pakistanis move to cities every year in search of economic opportunities. This is the phenomenon of urban migration that has led to the swelling of cities on their already bursting seams. The result is sprawling slums, where makeshift dwellings stretch as far as the eye can see, where living conditions are dire and basic amenities like clean water and sanitation remain elusive dreams for many. Overcrowded housing, lack of sanitation and limited access to clean water and healthcare create a breeding ground for diseases and social issues. This rapid growth also places immense pressure on already strained resources, from healthcare and education to infrastructure and employment.

Syeda Sitwat Zahra, Karachi

Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment is a vital process that requires immediate attention from all countries. In Pakistan, Article 25 of the constitution unequivocally enunciates non-discrimination based on sex. Despite the government's efforts to address gender disparities, challenges persist. For instance, domestic violence, workplace harassment, sexual abuse and many other such vices hinder women's mental health and freedom to express themselves and exploit their talents. Pakistan has been ranked 145th out of 146 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index 2024, indicating a decline from its position in the previous year. To address this issue, it's crucial to change the cultural mindset, strengthen existing laws and implement microfinance initiatives, vocational training programs, and women's rights support. Napoleon Bonaparte said, "Give me an educated mother, and I shall promise you the birth of a civilized, educated nation." His words emphasize the significance of empowering women for a prosperous society. Only by supporting women's rights and education, can Pakistan unlock its full potential.

Aryan Kolachi, Larkana

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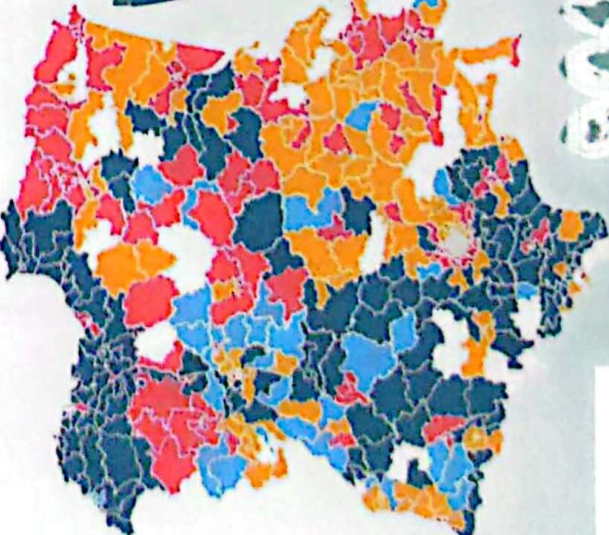
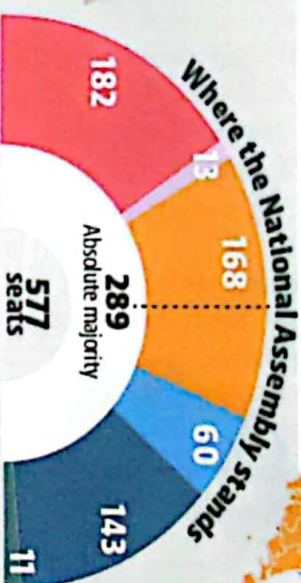
Au contraire: Left surprise in France

Voters chose to give a leftist coalition the most seats in France's legislative polls, keeping the Far-Right at bay. But no party won a majority, putting the EU's 2nd-largest country in a tenuous situation



A left-wing surge...

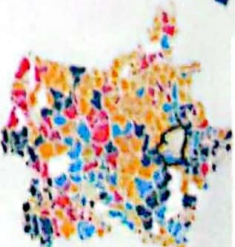
The left-wing coalition New Popular Front (NPF) alliance edged ahead of Emmanuel Macron's Ensemble coalition and Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) after coming together to keep the Far-Right, which made inroads after the first round of polling, at bay. The hard-left France Unbowed party, led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, emerged as the largest constituent of this bloc.



2024

- New Popular Front
- Ensemble and Horizons
- Republicans
- National Rally and allies
- Others

2022



...but it's not enough

All the coalitions fell far short of the majority mark, meaning none of the three can form a majority government and would need support from others to pass legislation.

What happens now?

The constitution says the President can decide who he asks to form a government. But whoever he picks faces a confidence vote in the National Assembly, which will convene for 15 days on July 18. This means Macron needs to name someone acceptable to a majority of lawmakers. Macron will likely be hoping to peel off Socialists and Greens from the leftist alliance, isolating France Unbowed, to form a centre-left coalition with his own bloc.

What if there's no common ground?

In one word – crisis. Macron cannot call new parliamentary polls for another 12 months. He also turned down PM Gabriel Attali's resignation on Monday, asking him to stay "for the time being to ensure the stability of the country".

Unprecedented since 1958

France is not used to the kind of post-poll coalition-building common in several other parliamentary democracies. Its Fifth Republic system of government was designed in 1958 to give large, stable parliamentary majorities to presidents. But that has instead created a confrontational political culture with no tradition of consensus or compromise.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR...

Emmanuel Macron

He may have seen off the Far-Right threat, but Macron faces a frustrating three years in office after gambling away much of his political power. People close to him said the move was indicative of how out of touch he has become with an electorate increasingly disenchanted with him.

Marine Le Pen

Le Pen and her young protégé Jordan Bardella had been favourite to top the polls, threatening to upend economic and foreign policy. But they were stopped in their tracks, in a defeat signals at least a temporary pushback against a far-right surge in Europe.

People celebrate at the Place de la République in Paris on Monday.



Pakistanis in the House of Commons

A list of Pakistan/Kashmir-origin MPs in the new UK parliament

Magazine Desk

The ethnic Pakistani and Kashmiri politicians continued their winning streak in the British general elections, producing the "most diverse" parliament in UK history. Following are the 15 Pakistani and Kashmiri-origin MPs who have been elected to the British parliament in the 2024 elections.

1. Shabana Mahmood (Birmingham - Ladywood)

Shabana Mahmood (Labour), whose parents are of Pakistani descent with roots in Mirpur, Kashmir, won the seat with 15,558 votes. Ms. Mahmood has also created history by becoming the UK's first Muslim woman Lord Chancellor.

2. Barrister Ayoub Khan (Birmingham — Perry Barr)

Independent candidate Barrister Ayoub Khan (he moved to England from Ratta, AJK at six months old) beat Khalid Mahmood (Labour), the senior most British Pakistani parliamentarian who has been winning since 2001.

3. Tahir Ali (Birmingham — Hall Green & Moseley)

Tahir Ali (a son of Pakistani parents) has won the seat for Labour with 12,798 votes.

4. Naz Shah (Bradford West)

Naz Shah, also known as Naseem Shah, has won this seat for Labour with 11,724 votes. Ms. Shah's parents are from AJK.

5. Imran Hussain (Bradford East)

Imran Hussain retained his seat for Labour with 14,098 votes. Imran's parents are from Mirpur, AJK.

6. Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South and Walkden)

Yasmin Qureshi (Labour) has been elected with 15,093 votes. She was born in Gujrat, Pakistan.

7. Zarah Sultana (Coventry South)

Zarah Sultana won the seat

for Labour with 20,361 votes. Her grandfather migrated from Dadyal Tehsil of AJK to Birmingham in the 1960s.

8. Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (London — Tooting)

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Labour) is half-Pakistani and half-Polish (her father Mohammad Aslam Khan was from Pakistan). She won this seat for Labour with 29,209 votes.

9. Afzal Khan (Manchester — Rusholme)

Afzal Khan (Labour) has been re-elected with 15,054 votes. He hails from Jhelum, Pakistan.

10. Saqib Bhatti (Meriden and Solihull East)

Saqib Bhatti (Conservative) has clung on to his seat with 16,792. His father, Younis Bhatti, is from Gujjar Khan, while his mother is from Murree.

11. Nusrat Ghani (Sussex Weald)

Nusrat Ghani (Conservative) has retained the seat with 16,758 votes. She was born to Mirpuri parents.

12. Mohammad Yasin (Bedford)

Mohammad Yasin (Labour) retained this seat for Labour with 18,342 votes. He was born in 1971 in Samhani, Mirpur (AJK).

13. Dr Zubir Ahmed (Glasgow South West)

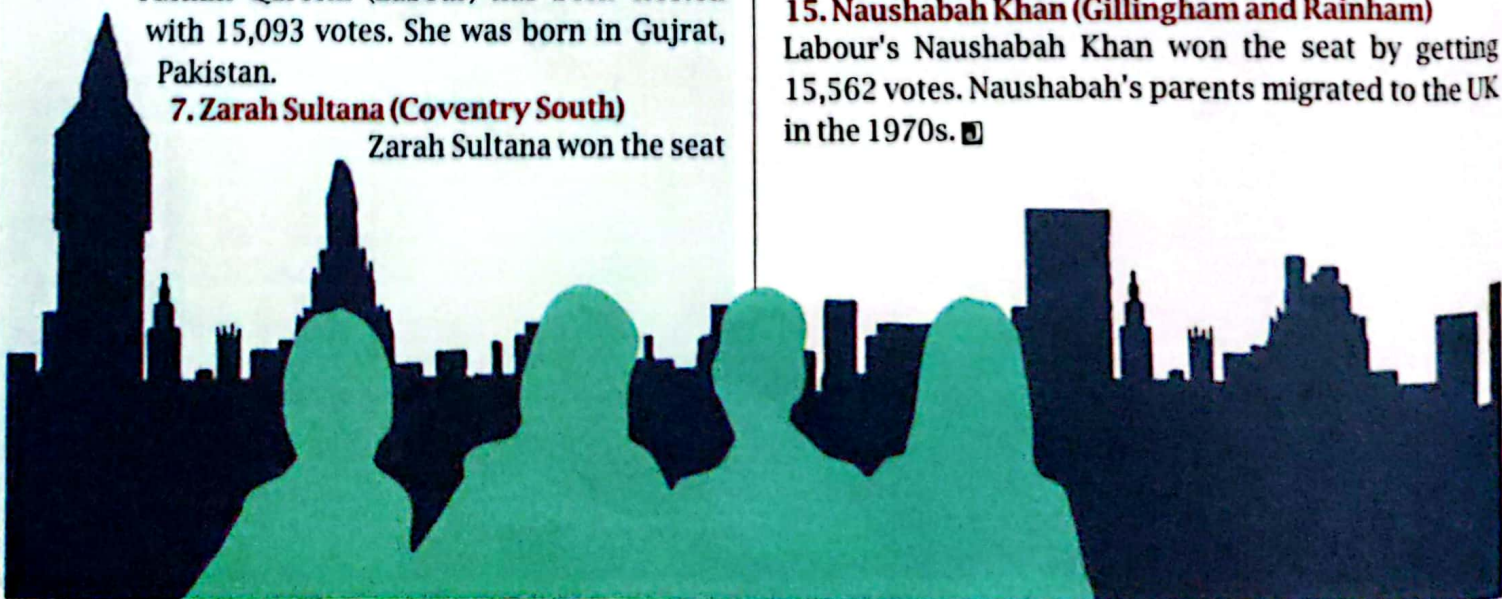
Dr Zubir Ahmed (a transplant surgeon) has won on the Labour ticket with 15,552. He was born to Pakistani parents who had come to Scotland in 1963.

14. Adnan Hussain (Blackburn)

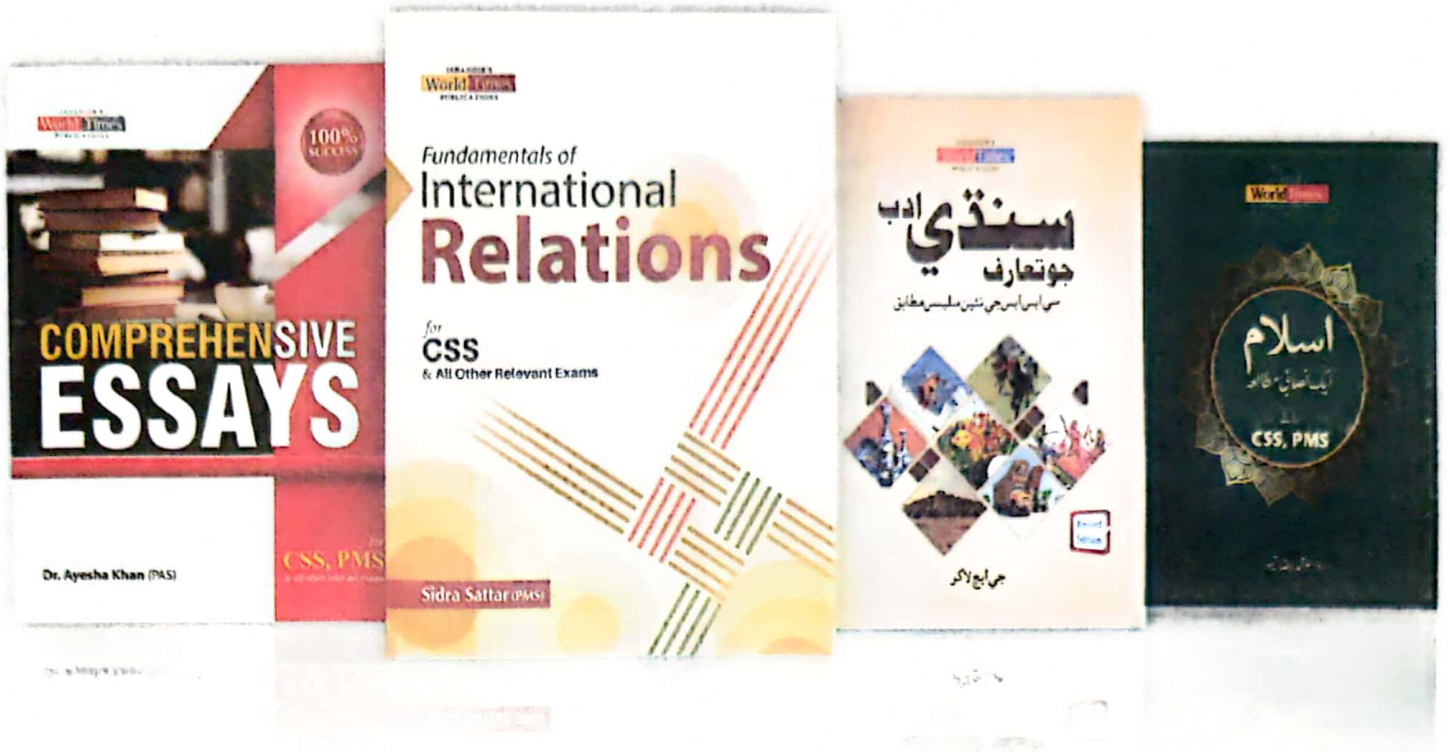
Adnan Hussain unseated Labour's Kate Hollern in Blackburn. He was born to Pakistani parents.

15. Naushabah Khan (Gillingham and Rainham)

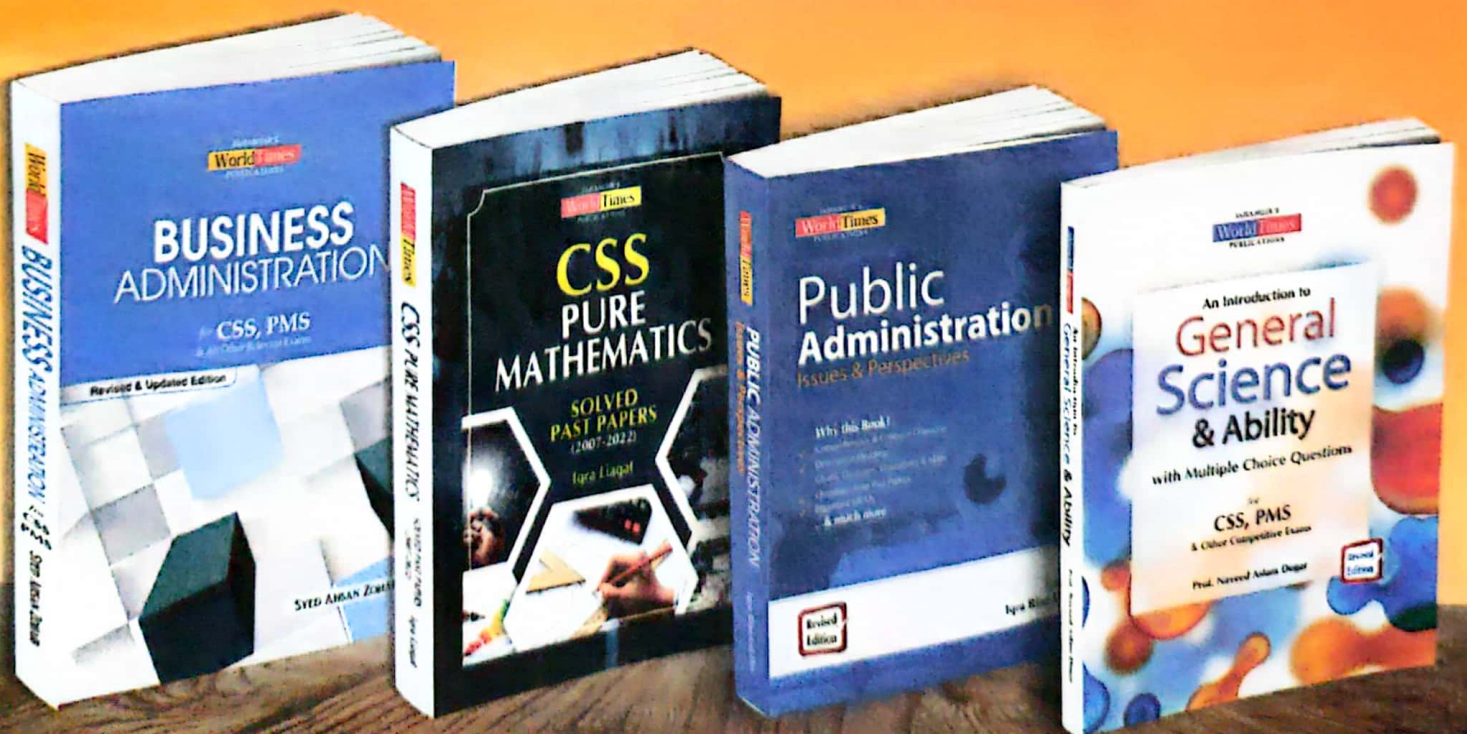
Labour's Naushabah Khan won the seat by getting 15,562 votes. Naushabah's parents migrated to the UK in the 1970s. ■



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More challenges to democracy ahead

Ali Riaz

In 2023, rightly called the year of elections, four recent national elections have sent some messages that deserve our attention, particularly considering that we are living in an era wherein democracy is under threat globally and extremism is on the rise. These apparently disparate elections and their results seem to have some common elements with lessons for liberal democratic forces around the world. These elections have been held in India, for the European Parliament, in the UK and in France. Held between April 19 and July 7, these elections were closely observed for several reasons. And there have been arguments that these may serve as barometers to the future of democracy.

India's election, with the largest number of voters in the world, and with the widespread prediction that Narendra Modi's Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) will continue in power with a larger number of parliamentary seats this time around, ended up with a result which put a brake on Modi's authoritarian tendencies. Defying predictions by pollsters, the opposition alliance INDIA, led by the Indian National Congress, emerged as a formidable opposition after a decade, and the BJP failed to secure an absolute majority in Lok Sabha. The past decade witnessed a serious erosion of democracy in India. There were, and still are, concerns about what path the country will take under Modi's third term.

The European Parliament election, held between June 6 and 9, was a gigantic endeavour because of the number of countries involved—27, to be precise. With the growing appeal of rightwing populism in Europe, the question was: will the far-right eclipse the centrists and shape the future trend in Europe?

The British election, held on July 4, delivered a shift of power after 14 years from the Conservative Party to the Labour Party, as anticipated. But the results revealed a few disturbing trends.

Parliamentary elections in France were held in two rounds, on June 30 and July 7, but were not anticipated to happen so soon before June 9. The early election was a consequence of the dismal electoral performance of President Emmanuel Macron's party in the European Parliament election. In a sense, it was a gamble by Macron, which turned out to be more high-stake than Macron and the French people had anticipated. The elections almost brought the rightwing National Rally (NR) to the gates of power, only to be pushed away by the left alliance—New Popular Front (NPF)—which came into existence only after the first round of voting.

The results of elections in India, France and Britain demonstrate that voters are unhappy with the incumbents, but most importantly, their economic policies. It is not surprising that elections put incumbents in a difficult spot; elections are often considered a referendum on the incumbents, as they must defend their records. But in these instances, including in part in the Iranian election, it was beyond anti-incumbency.

While the economy is not the only reason for unseating the Conservatives in Britain, there are other factors, such as the dismal state of the National Health Service (NHS). Nevertheless, the bread-and-butter issue was the driving force. In India, unemployment, falling incomes and inflation, coupled with farmers' discontent,

became the hurdles that Modi and his party failed to cross. France's debt situation has been a matter of concern for all in the Eurozone, while dissatisfaction has been growing among French citizens. The lesson is clear: "it is the economy, stupid."

The shock victory of France's left alliance has allowed many across Europe to heave a sigh of relief. The victory of the Labour Party in Britain, although predicted ahead of the election, in some measures has engendered similar reactions. The Indian election result gives hope that the downward spiral is stopped, at least for now. These are the results that can be read as rejection of anti-pluralist extremist politics. But a closer look at it shows that the right-wing extremist forces are far from being defeated.

In India, it is still the BJP and Modi in power, and there is no reason to believe that the pernicious politics of division will be shunned. It has taken root in society, and cannot be ignored. In Britain, Labour has secured an historic win, but its support has remained almost the same as in 2019, and an almost 20 percent swing from Conservatives did not go to Labour or LibDem, but to the extreme right wing Reform UK party. The Reform UK party has secured more than 14 percent of the popular vote, and has placed itself as the third largest party ahead of the LibDem.

In France, even after the left parties came together and reached an understanding with the centrist parties, the vote share of the NR and its allies stood at 37.6 percent. These figures echo the results of the European Parliament elections, which saw a surge of rightwing parties in Germany, France, Italy and Austria. Although the European Parliament has limited power for domestic issues, the rise of the rightwing parties was not a complete surprise. Indeed, one can take comfort in the fact that despite rightwing parties performing well, the centre-right and centre-left groupings have retained their dominance in the European Parliament. But what will happen in the future if the present trend continues is an open question. If there is a lesson, it is that the danger to liberal democracy is not over. Instead, the coming years will be more challenging.

Do these elections indicate a strategy to beat populist

politics? In India, unlike the past two occasions, Modi's populist rhetoric did not work as the opposition made the election a choice of policy more than of personality. France's election, at least in the first round, sends a different message—populism works. The same is the message from the rise of the Reform UK party. In the European Parliament elections, the right-wing parties which did well are known for their populist rhetoric. Some analysts, for example, Max Boot in the Washington Post, suggest that centrist politics is the antidote to populism. He refers to the policy shift of the Labour Party under Keir Starmer vis-à-vis Jeremy Corbyn as an example. Undoubtedly, Starmer has moved the party to

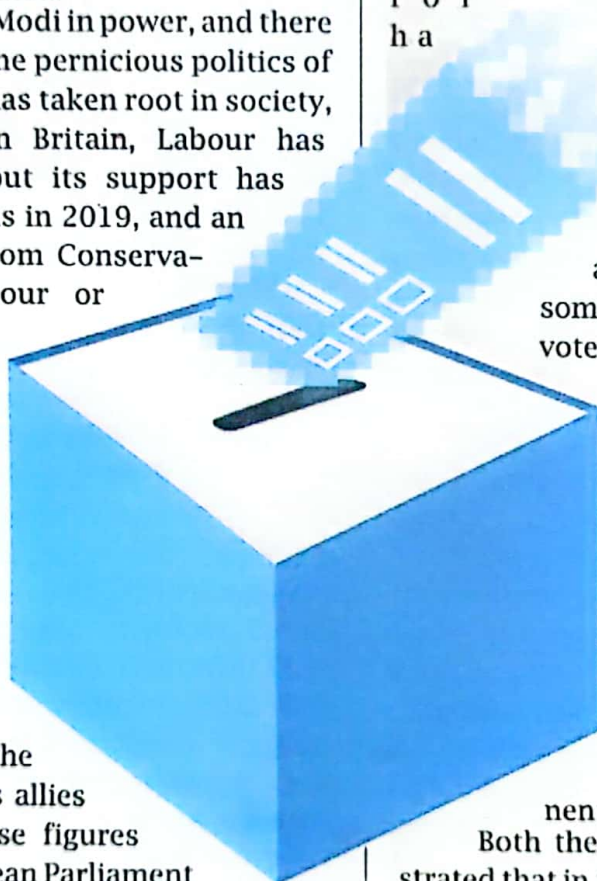
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the centre, but there has been a price that too. The Labour Party secured less popular votes than in 2019.

The argument that moderation and centrism is the way to go does not resonate with the French election results, as the Left alliance has some parties which have somewhat left-extremist positions. The voters have not rejected them. As such, these elections have not made any serious dent to populist politics. There is a need for soul searching as to how to address the rising appeal of populist demagogues. In the United States, Trump is the personification of such pernicious populist politics. His appeal to the voters has not subsided; instead, with less than five months to go before the election, he is ahead of his Democrat opponent.

Both the Indian and French elections demonstrated that in the face of grave threats from undemocratic political forces, it is imperative to close the ranks and build an alliance. The opposition alliance INDIA is a bloc of disparate parties, but their decision to stand together to challenge the Modi regime provided an alternative to Indian voters. Similarly, the NPF in France is not a cohesive alliance. In fact, the partners were engaged in rhetorical battle until the first round of the election. Whether they can work together and work with centrist parties will be tested in the coming days. But for the moment, one must acknowledge, the left has played an historic role. ■

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Opportunities for emerging economies

S. Malik

In today's multipolar world order, geo-economics has taken precedence over geopolitics in the policy formulation processes of many nations and emerging economies, too, are cooperating for shared economic prosperity. The shift from geopolitics to geo-economics is not as sudden as it may seem. Many organizations and countries have played a crucial role in making it happen. BRICS, the acronym denoting the emerging national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is an example of a geo-economic model that has achieved remarkable milestones since its inception.

During the BRICS summit held in South Africa on 22-24 August 2023, six countries - Ethiopia, Egypt, Argentina, Iran, the UAE and Saudi Arabia - were invited to join the grouping. Argentina declined owing to its own geopolitical compulsions; however, the remaining five nations joined as members of BRICS on 1 January 2024. With the inclusion of new members, the GDP of BRICS countries is expected to increase to USD 30.8 trillion. According to an IMF report, the expanded bloc will have a share of 37.3% in the world's GDP in 2025 and 38.5% in 2028.

This vividly manifests the growing role of BRICS countries in the world economy. According to an article titled "BRICS Countries' Increasing Role in the World Economy, Including Institutional Innovation," published in the BRICS Journal of Economics 2023, the share of BRICS in the world GDP rose from 11.9% in 2000 to 25.6% in 2021. The bloc had a combined GDP of USD 27.6 trillion in 2023, representing 31% of the global economy, making G7 countries second (with a 30% share).

It is important to note that intra-BRICS trade has remarkably increased, and China is playing a pivotal role in this regard. According to data released by

General Administration of Customs (GAC), China's foreign trade with BRICS countries was USD 326 billion in 2023, showing an increase of 19% as compared to that in 2022. Similarly, China-Russia trade reached USD 240 billion in 2023, which is an increase of 26% from the previous year. Despite the various border clashes and disputes, trade between China and India increased to USD 135.98 billion in 2022. China-Brazil trade reached USD 165.6 billion in the said year, an increase of 8.1%. South Africa is China's largest trade partner in Africa, with bilateral trade of USD 56.74 billion in 2022, which showed an increase of 11% as compared to the previous year.

BRICS countries established the New Development Bank (NDB) in 2015, which aims at mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging markets and developing countries. According to the official website of BRICS, the NDB was established as an alternative to the World Bank (WB). It has approved over 90 projects worth USD 33 billion for infrastructure development in emerging economies. The NDB has approved almost USD 33 billion in loans, mainly for water, transport and other infrastructure projects, since it began operation in 2015. Along with other BRICS countries, South Africa also borrowed one billion dollars in 2020 to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. It is important to note that, unlike the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the NDB does not have dictatorial conditional loans or aid for any of its member countries.

Economic activity in the BRICS entails implications for the existing global economic system. Trade in local currencies among BRICS countries weakens the US dollar. Some economists view it as a push towards de-dollarization. According to Oxford Business Group

2022, 88% of global currency trade in 2019 was in US dollars, but by 2022, this share dropped to 58.8%. In 2022, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye traded Russian and Chinese goods in yuan and ruble. In August 2023, India and the UAE started settling bilateral trade in their local currencies. New Delhi purchased a million barrels of crude oil in Indian rupee. On 20 December 2023, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Belusov told that in 2023, 95% of Russia-China trade was done in rubles and yuan.

Keeping in view the economic growth and rising trade relations between and among the BRICS nations, China and Russia have been calling for the expansion of BRICS since 2017 to provide opportunities for emerging economies.

Moreover, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Iran are oil-rich countries and joining BRICS will help them increase their share of oil production. According to the Energy Institute Statistical Review of World Energy Report (2022), adding oil economies in BRICS countries would increase the share of oil production from 20.4% to 43.1%. According to oil exports and production data for 2022 of the the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the BRICS Plus is going to change the power balance in the global energy market. In terms of oil reserves, the group will also control nearly 719.5 billion barrels - half of the world's total of 1.6 trillion barrels whereas the G7 group of leading economies, which includes the US, UK, Germany, Italy, Canada, France and Japan, controls only 3.9% of known crude oil reserves. Moreover, Russia and China can help diversify the oil-based economies of Iran and Saudi Arabia. The inclusion of Iran in the BRICS may help reduce the impact of US sanctions against it. Given that the country is the world's eighth-largest oil producer and possesses the third-largest oil reserves, it can fulfil the energy requirements of BRICS countries to a great extent.

The addition of Ethiopia and Egypt to the BRICS countries would open a new avenue for economic growth and their political outreach to the BRICS nations. Ethiopia aims to modernize its agricultural sector, increase productivity and improve food production and distribution through the utilization of advanced agricultural technologies and know-how from BRICS countries. Egypt is reeling under heavy foreign debt, a weakening currency and rising inflation. BRICS coun-

tries' trade in local currencies can help this African powerhouse come out of its financial crisis and foreign debt. Moreover, according to the Egyptian State media, on 25 August 2023, the Egyptian Minister for Finance, Mohammad Maeet, emphasized that Egypt's membership in the BRICS will boost investment, provide new export avenues and strengthen economic cooperation and trade between BRICS countries and Egypt.

The transition in global order requires nations to adjust their political and economic priorities accordingly. Pakistan has also applied for membership in the BRICS. Its inclusion will connect it with an already-wide network of rail and roads that connects most of the BRICS countries. The BRICS Plus membership would:

(i) strengthen Pakistan's economic position and help find new markets in BRICS nations;

(ii) alleviate Pakistan's position in the region and beyond;

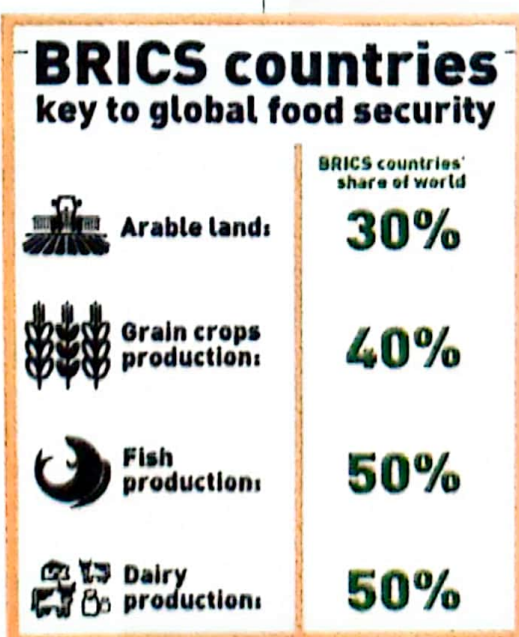
(iii) provide a sustainable oil supply chain; and

(iv) expand socio-cultural and educational exchanges. But for Pakistan to successfully join BRICS or compete in other arenas internationally, the political instability at home needs to be addressed. Moscow, Beijing and other key BRICS members should consider inviting Pakistan to join at the summit in Russia later this year, or should at least announce a concrete roadmap for Pakistan's candidacy. Pakistan has much to gain economically and diplomatically by joining such Global South forums.

The expansion of BRICS will open new opportunities for emerging economies. The potential of BRICS countries and increasing trade within the organization would give a new impetus to emerging economies for sustainable development and growth. The inclusion of natural resource-rich African countries and oil-rich Middle Eastern economies would increase the GDP of BRICS

countries. The NDB, as an alternative to the WB or IMF, would ease the project financing process in BRICS member states. This will reduce their dependency on Western financial institutions and strengthen their currencies. Inclusion of emerging economies in BRICS will not only entail economic benefits, but also the exchange of ideas, innovation and knowledge that will pave the way for shared prosperity. ■

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RUSSIA AND THE EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER

**"Russia is never as strong as she looks; Russia is never as weak as she looks."
— Winston Churchill.**

Saad Ahmed

In international relations, the words 'expansionism' and 'insecurity' are considered synonymous with Russia. The Russians believe that when a state stops expanding, it starts declining, and it is this sense of decline that brings insecurities for Russia. Vast swathes of the Russian landmass are located in Asia,

but its insecurities always originate from Europe. In its real essence, Russia is the prisoner of both its history and geography.

The flatlands in eastern Ukraine allured many European invaders, like Napoleon's Grande Armée and Hitler's Nazi Army, into Russia throughout the history

of this country. These insecurities from Europe compelled Russia to forge a European security order in compliance with its strategic self-interest. During the Cold War, the Russians remained, to a great extent, successful in creating a balance of power in Europe by taking the entire Eastern Europe under their influence. But the threat of the expansion of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) remained intact throughout the Cold War era. The disintegration of the USSR did not end animosity between Russia and the West. The divergent visions of the post-Cold War European security order further compli-



cated the crisis. Despite Western promises, NATO continued to expand eastward towards Russia. This unrestrained expansion added layers of insecurity and doubts in the minds of Russian policymakers, and they also started taking precautionary steps.

The Russian invasion of Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine has proved that reconciliation in the nature of the European security architecture is impossible until the radical transformation of the West or Russia. Both options seem unreal at the moment. The competition between Russia and the West is actually between the liberal rule-based order and the realist geopolitical order. Russia, which, in the words of John Mearsheimer, is a "weak big power," wants to maintain European order on the principles of balance of power and the recognition of its sphere of influence.

While the hawkish policymakers in Europe and the neocons sitting in Washington aim to divide Russia further on ethnic and geographical lines, making it a sick man of both Europe and Asia. Russian leaders like Gorbachev, Yeltsin and, more recently, even Putin, until 2007, were ardent proponents of joining the West-led rule-based order and maintaining healthy geopolitical relations with both the United States and Europe. But, an unprovoked expansion of NATO forced Putin to change his thinking regarding the European security structure. Putin's famous speech at the 2007 Munich Security Summit also highlighted the unrestrained use of force in the arena of international relations, which was a clear indication of the West's sinister geopolitical designs towards Russia.

Russia is yearning for equality not only with its European neighbours but also with the global powers. But the West-orchestrated "Colour Revolutions" in Europe and the expansion of the EU and NATO are persistently undermining the legitimate Russian security concerns in Europe. Russia is against the politico-military presence of any third country in its adjoining states. The West, in fact, forced Russia to invade Ukraine by inviting the latter to join NATO. And now the US and the Europeans are promising to fight in Ukraine against Russia. No big, even a middle, power accepts the presence of rival forces in their backyard. Can the US accept the presence of Russian or Chinese

forces in Mexico? Obviously, no! The same logic is applicable also to the Russian dilemma. The enlargement of NATO is restricting Russia from exerting its influence on its former vassals and from geostrategic manoeuvring in Europe. And all these things are haunting Russia more because the major land powers have more insecurities than the sea powers. And this further forced Russia to perceive even the expansion of the EU as a Trojan horse for NATO expansion.

The democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe are also a source of constant worry for Russia. Eastern Europe was the Russian stronghold throughout the Cold War. That is why democratic revolutions there sparked intense outcry in Russia. Many political analysts believed that a real response from Russia would come



when the loyalty of Ukraine came under question. This prediction proved right, and Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Zbigniew Brzezinski, in his book "The Grand Chessboard," said, "Russia ceases to be an empire without Ukraine." The removal of Viktor Yanukovich in 2014 through the US-sponsored 'Revolution of Dignity' and the subsequent pursuance of suicidal nationalism by Ukraine proved the hypothesis of Brzezinski. From that point on, Russia started preparing for a large-scale invasion of Ukraine. The democratic deficit in Russia forced the Russians to view these colour revolutions with suspicion. The Kremlin policymakers were of the view that the West was using democratic values as a geopolitical tool. Putin replied by using naked aggression in Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine because of the strong acceptance of the aggression in the Russian political system and society. And Putin knows that his "strongman aura" is

the major factor behind his stay in power. In post-war Europe, Putin will again try to dictate his terms from the position of power.

For the last 2-3 centuries, the suitable model for Russia has been multipolarity based on the principle of balance of power. Since 2014, the Russian representatives have presented the historical model of balance of power, carved out by Prince Metternich of Austria in 1814-15, as a suitable model for Russian-European relations and the model of the 1945 Yalta Conference, which brought decades of stability to Europe. During the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev, Russia made the most significant attempt



to revise the security calculus of Europe. The proposal simply asked the European nations to codify the "Indivisibility of Security." But the war with Georgia shattered all the hopes because, according to Western policymakers, Russia had already broken the rules that it wanted to codify. And there were also some reservations in Europe that the Russians wanted to confine NATO to the "historical West." The neocons, who have dominated American foreign policy since the time of Ronald Reagan, have made up their minds about not allowing Russia any space in Europe. They clearly explained their global strategic priorities in their famous policy document, "Rebuilding American Defenses." The supply of deadly weapons to Ukraine, the blowing up of the Nord Stream pipeline and approximately 14,000 sanctions on Russia by the US and European nations are clear manifestations of the fact that Russia and the West, especially Europe, cannot swim together in the ocean of global geopolitics.

The Russian and European world orders are not poles but globes apart. They have severe ideological, political, economic, cultural and strategic differences. This struggle of the conflicting visions for the security architecture of Europe will continue until the radical defeat of one party. One can predict three scenarios for the future European security order in the aftermath of the Ukraine war.

1. The emergence of the dual order in Europe, with

Russia and the NATO as the dominant powers in their respective spheres of influence.

2. The emergence of a realist balance of power in favour of Russia! This scenario is more likely if Ukraine suffers a humiliating defeat and Donald Trump is elected president of the USA. The American withdrawal from the European security order means the dominance of the Russian security order in Europe. Europe is not capable of facing the military-industrial complex of Russia on its own, as evident in the case of Ukraine.

3. The rule-based order will be victorious, and it will be adopted by Russia. It is more idealistic than realistic.

At the present moment, Ukraine is on the verge of a humiliating defeat. And Russian

history mirrors the fact that even radical domestic changes did not alter the ideological basis of Russian security and foreign policy, as evident in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR. Furthermore, Russia lacks any viable political substitute for the incumbent oligarchy and kleptocracy.

Two things about the Russian future are still unknown: their future political system and their future political leader. In the words of Churchill, "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma, but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interests."

To conclude, Russian insecurities towards Europe are genuine and deeply rooted in the country's geography, psychology and history. And there is also no denying the fact that Russia is a big power, third only to America and China. So, it is the right time for the European leaders to create security mechanisms in collaboration with Russia, not in collusion with the US. The Europeans need to listen to their strategic godfather, Bismarck, who once said, "The secret of politics is to make a good treaty with Russia." ■

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Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent high-profile visit to North Korea culminated in a landmark pact between the two countries whereby both have pledged "immediate military assistance if either faces armed aggression," – a move that has raised Western concerns about potential Russian aid for Pyongyang's missile or nuclear programmes. The inclusion of a mutual defence clause in their comprehensive strategic partnership, which Kim described as an "alliance," will add to the West's alarm over growing economic and military ties between North Korea and Russia.

Only interests are eternal and perpetual in international relations

Shafqat Javed



"A great deal of world politics is a fundamental struggle, but it is also a struggle that has to be waged intelligently." — Zbigniew Brzezinski

It is said that in politics, there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies but only permanent interest. And, the recent Russia-North Korea pact aptly evidences the veracity of this assertion because where once Moscow, a veto-holding member of the United Nations Security Council, worked with the international community to rein in Pyongyang's missile and nuclear weapons programs, is now appears to be giving its explicit support to the world's most-isolated regime.

On June 19, Russian president, Vladimir Putin, capped off his two-day trip to the reclusive state of North Korea with the surprise signing of a new comprehensive strategic partnership pact. The signing of the treaty, which stipulates, inter alia, that if one of the countries is in a state of war, the other will provide it with military assistance, has been described by Putin as a breakthrough that will elevate the cooperation between the two countries to a new level. Kim called the treaty "peaceful and defensive in nature."

Historical context

The ties between Pyongyang and Moscow go back to Soviet times. The Soviet Union was the first nation to recognize North Korea, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), when it came into existence in 1948 under Kim Jong-un's grandfather, Kim Il-

sung. This recognition was made because the erstwhile Soviet Union wanted the installation of a communist regime in Korea – Moscow supported DPRK in the 1950-53 Korean War, while the US supported the Republic of Korea (ROK), or South Korea. That's why the USSR offered significant military assistance to North Korea's founder, Kim Il-sung, during the War.

In a previously classified letter, which is now available in Wilson Centre's digital archives, Kim Il-sung thanked Soviet leader Joseph Stalin for his "invaluable assistance" to DPRK's "struggle for independence." Stalin's support for DPRK in this War, however, also benefited the leader's larger ambition to push back the US in the Cold War, which was evident from another "top secret" letter he wrote under the codename "Fillipov" in 1950. "One might ask why we have now returned to the Security Council. We have returned to continue exposing the aggressive policy of the American government and to prevent it from using the flag of the Security Council as a smokescreen for its aggression. Now that America has become aggressively involved in Korea, it will be very easy to achieve this goal while in the Security Council. I think that this is clear and needs no further explanation," Stalin said in this letter addressed to the Soviet ambassador in Prague.

However, after the end of the Korean War, these initially robust relations started fracturing as the rift between China and Russia grew. The Soviet Union also

established diplomatic relations with ROK, further isolating DPRK in the region. Russia, which succeeded the Soviet Union, continued these diplomatic relations.

However, in 1961, the two nations solidified their alliance with the signing of the Russo-North Korea Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which, like the latest pact, contained a mutual defence agreement. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, this treaty was voided and relations temporarily deteriorated.

Since the early 2000s, however, Putin-ruled Russia has gotten closer to the Kim family-ruled North Korea regime. After his election, Putin visited Pyongyang in July 2000, to meet Kim Jong-il, the former leader of DPRK and Kim Jong-un's father, and the two issued a joint criticism of US missile defence plans. In 2012, Russia agreed to write off 90% of North Korea's estimated \$11 billion debt, although Russia supported UN Security Council sanctions against it between 2016 and 2017 as Kim accelerated the country's nuclear and missile tests. Kim, in fact, attempted to improve his diplomatic ties with the US and ROK in favour of his nuclear program, while also working on relations with historical allies, i.e. China and Russia.

Things changed for the better in 2022 as Russia invaded Ukraine and Putin found himself increasingly isolated internationally. Today, the world is as divided as it has been since the end of the Cold War but Russia and North Korea stand together against the West.

The new deal

The latest deal replaces the Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighbourliness Treaty that the two countries signed in 2000, just after Putin became president for the first time and North Korea was under the rule of Kim Jong-il, the father of Kim Jong-un. But its contents more closely echo the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance that was signed in 1961 when Russia was the dominant power in the now-defunct Soviet Union.

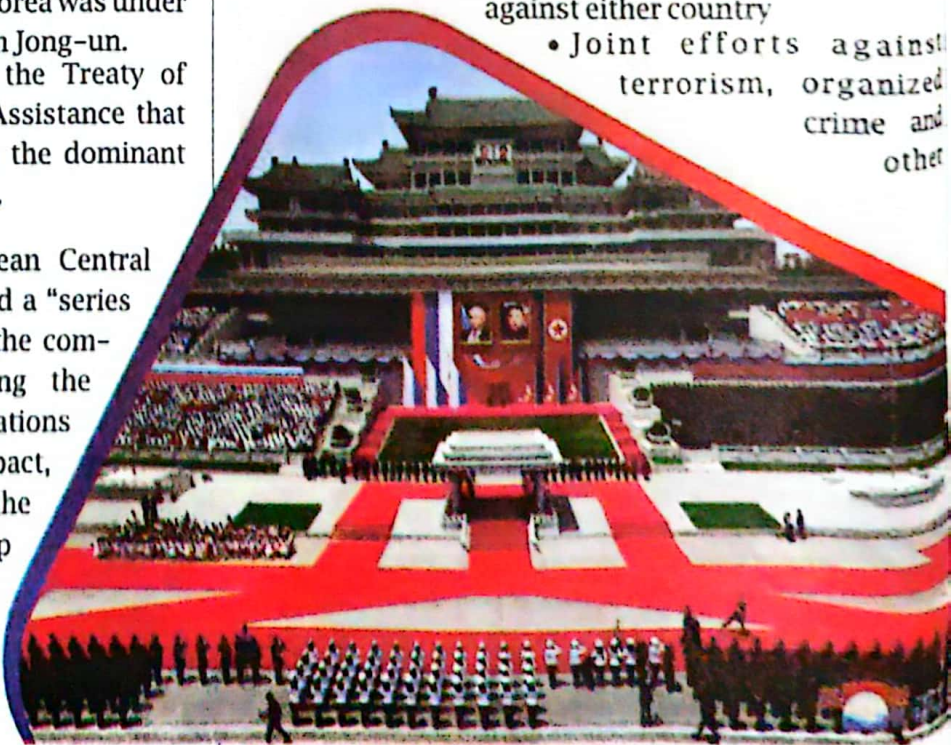
A look at the pact

According to DPRK's state-run Korean Central News Agency, Kim and Putin discussed a "series of important plans for safeguarding the common core interests while deepening the strategic partnership and alliance relations between the two countries." The pact, officially called the "Treaty on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation" calls for immediate military and other assistance "using

all available means" if either party is involved in a war which it claims is in alignment with Article 51 of the UN charter (dealing with self-defence.)

The treaty also talks about building a "just and multipolar new world order," and taking joint action to strengthen defence capabilities. Food, which is a chronic area of shortage for the DPRK, also finds mention in the Treaty. As well as the mutual defence deal, which has attracted the most attention, it also includes provisions for cooperation in healthcare, medical education and science, as well as plans for a road bridge across the Tumen River. Here is a brief look at the treaty:

- Mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs
- Cooperation for global strategic stability and a new international order
- Mutual defense commitment, including military assistance if attacked
- Agreement not to sign treaties with third parties that infringe on each other's interests
- Support for a multipolar world order and cooperation in international organizations
- Joint efforts to strengthen defense capabilities and ensure regional security
- Collaboration on global challenges like food security, energy and climate change
- Expansion of economic, scientific and technological cooperation
- Promotion of regional and cross-border economic ties
- Cultural and educational exchanges
- Legal cooperation, including extradition and asset recovery
- Opposition to unilateral coercive measures against either country
- Joint efforts against terrorism, organized crime and other



security threats

- Cooperation on information security and combating false information
- Promotion of each other's literature and objective information sharing

Strategic implications

For South Korea and Japan, this Treaty is likely to be perceived as a direct security threat. Both countries have long been concerned about North Korea's nuclear program, and military strength. The Russian security umbrella will only add to these concerns.

This is likely to push both countries to strengthen their defences and rethink their security policies. Japan has already moved away from its long-standing pacifist foreign policy, and is in the process of building its military might.

South Korea convened an emergency meeting of its national security council in response and said it would now consider sending arms to Ukraine, something it had, thus far, resisted.

Both South Korea and Japan are likely going to further cement their alliance with the United States, in response.

The United States has already reaffirmed its commitment to its allies.

NATO has expressed deep concern about the Pact, highlighting the risks to global security and the potential for increased nuclear proliferation.

The Russia-North Korea pact could also encourage similar partnerships, elsewhere, most notably with Iran. For the West, these will continue to pose a major threat.

China, a traditional ally of North Korea, is likely to be conflicted about the development.

While the Treaty strengthens the anti-West bulwark in Asia, China would be wary of Russia's growing military collaboration with North Korea, which could undermine its influence over this country. It would also be concerned about a greater Western footprint in Asia, as a result of this development.

How Chinese view this pact

The Chinese are conflicted. They are North Korea's biggest supporters, but they also have an uneasy relationship characterized by suspicion on both sides. Chinese President Xi Jinping didn't even meet with North Korea's Kim until Trump decided to meet with him. From the Chinese perspective, close ties between Russia and North Korea are a welcome distraction for Washington. But China is also wary of having Russia dilute its sway over North Korea by

offering itself as an alternative source of support. North Korea's increasing military collaboration with Russia undermines Beijing's almost exclusive geopolitical influence over Pyongyang. Beijing may also be concerned that the Russia-North Korea axis could bring the United States, Japan and South Korea closer together and increase the US military footprint near China.

Given that there are some overlapping concerns in Beijing and Washington, it would make sense for the Joe Biden administration to reach out to the Chinese government and try to foster greater unease about closer Russia-North Korea alignment.

Conclusion

Ever since the Ukraine war, Putin has steadily expanded Russia's cooperation with countries that are at odds with the US. He reportedly bought kamikaze drones from Iran. China has also emerged as a key economic, technological and energy partner. And, by promising to help North Korea, an isolated state that is still technically at war with South Korea, in the event of an attack, Russia has signalled its readiness to play a larger role in northeast Asia. Putin, essentially a cold warrior, wants to build an axis of the 'others' opposed by the West to expedite the churn in the global order. China remains cautious but seems fine with the idea of its closest partners challenging the Western order. This will have far-reaching geopolitical consequences. North Korea will now have little incentive to discuss denuclearization. Russia, which already has testy ties with Japan, could see its relationship with South Korea deteriorating. The agreement is also likely to strengthen the emerging tripartite partnership in East Asia among Japan, South Korea and the US, further solidifying the new cold war between great powers, which is still in its early stages. ■

The writer is an Assistant Editor of JWT.





SHANGHAI COOPERATION Organisation

A growing threat to US hegemony

Most of us have never known a world where the United States was not the pre-eminent power. This dominance was tested and challenged by the former Soviet Union, but the demise of the communist bloc only seemed to confirm the extent of American hegemony as Francis Fukuyama proposed in his influential essay 'The End of History'. Although he suggested that the great ideological battles between the East and the West were over, and that western liberal democracy had triumphed, this doesn't seem to be the case any longer. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was formed in 2001 by China, Russia – the principal adversaries of the United States of America – and several Central Asian countries, and has now expanded both in scope and membership, including influential players like India and Pakistan, is increasingly emerging as a significant challenge to US hegemony in global politics. This regional alliance, initially focused on security and economic cooperation, is now evolving into a formidable geopolitical force. As it strengthens its military, economic and strategic partnerships, the SCO undermines the unilateral influence traditionally exerted by the United States, signalling a shift towards a more multipolar world order. This development raises critical questions about the future of global power dynamics and the ability of the US to maintain its dominant position on the world stage. In the instant article, the writer has tried to find answers to these critical and crucial questions.

Aftab H. Wahla



In the 14th century, Ibn Khaldun, who is widely regarded as the father of modern sociology, came up with an innovative yet influential explanation for the rise and fall of empires. He argued that empires are just like organisms; they go through birth, growth, maturity, decline and ultimately death. The same is the case with the United States of America (USA). The hegemonic order that this uncontested global superpower maintained in the post-World War II era has started showing cracks. Ever-deepening strategic cooperation between Russia and China, ferocious courting and manoeuvring of the Global South and setbacks to dollar-based international trade and finance are some indications that the unravelling of the US hegemonic order is right underway. But what factors are responsible for this presumably "hege-

monic succession"? Though multiple forces are playing their roles, the expansion and internationalization of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has the potential to become instrumental in this historic power transition and transformation. In particular, SCO Plus, in the wake of the recently-concluded Astana Summit, has raised concerns in the Western capitals over the future of the West-dominated international system. Therefore, a closer examination of this potent regional grouping is critical to better understand the fast-evolving geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape of the world.

Before we discuss the implications of SCO expansion vis-à-vis the US-led neoliberal international order and the global system of institutions, values and rules propagated and patronized by the US, it is pertinent to unearth what material and normative forces have been



supporting US hegemony for the last seven decades.

The first underlying force reinforcing this hegemonic order is economic leverage and trade agreements. Historically, successive US administrations have always leveraged their country's robust and diverse economy to sustain their hegemonic position. They have always used their economic prowess to create a network of alliances and trade agreements so as to further their strategic interests. The US economic dominance rests upon three pillars: (i) the role of international institutions such as the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF, (ii) regional trade blocs such as Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and USMCA, and (iii) financial mechanisms such as the use of the dollar as primary reserve and trade currency. The WTO and the IMF provide the US with unchallenged space to shape economic policies, formulate trade rules and lay down financial regulations. In particular, Washington leverages its influence in the IMF to impact the economic policies of countries seeking bailout packages from this lender of the last resort. Similarly, the regional trade agreements and dollarization of international finance and trade also strengthen the US's economic cloud.

The second material factor responsible for the longstanding US hegemony is security alliances and a worldwide military presence. Given the formidable position of the US military and the staggering amount of defence spending (\$820 billion in 2023, surpassing that of the next 10 countries combined), there is no denying that US military strength has a pivotal role in sustaining US hegemony. The US relies on an extensive network of security alliances and military bases spread all over the globe to project its power, influence regional dynamics and position itself strategically to secure its geopolitical and geoeconomic interests. For instance, the US has deployed 450,000 active-duty soldiers in more than 135 countries. This omnipresence serves various ends; for instance, the US's largest military base in South Korea and its security alliances with Australia and Japan allow it to contain North Korea and sustain its "containment policy" in the Asia-Pacific region. Similarly, the US presence in Djibouti ensures that it can influence developments in the Red Sea and perform surveillance of the Bab el-Mandeb strait, another important chokepoint in the Indian Ocean for oil shipments. The most evident demonstration of US military strength is its Carrier Strike Groups or CSGs. They are 11 in number and combine aircraft carriers,

nuclear submarines, destroyers, frigates and high-tech and advanced fleets of fighter jets. The CSGs have helped the US extend its power well beyond its borders, and each CSG has enough firepower to rival the air forces of entire nations. These CSGs can strike targets from 1,000 miles away, which means nations under attack have little options to respond. In short, the US military has been the most powerful and influential player in world politics, reinforcing US dominance and strengthening its role in shaping regional and global geopolitical landscapes. The expansion of NATO right to the borders of Russia also demonstrates the power projection of the United States. This transatlantic alliance has been instrumental in safeguarding US interests in Europe and responsible for geopolitical developments that mostly support the continuing dominant role of Washington in global affairs.

The third pillar on which the edifice of US hegemony stands is the convergence of technological innovation and soft power projection. Over the years, the US has leveraged the power of technological advancement to project its soft power abroad. For instance, Hollywood movies and US-based platforms such as YouTube, X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook have played a major role in promoting US values, culture and narrative across the world. These platforms have rules and regulations that support the propagation of normative forces that reinforce the neoliberal world order. For instance, human rights, democracy, freedom of expression and secular identities are some norms that enjoy widespread and bipartisan US support, allowing successive administrations to allocate resources and even launch military operations to cultivate them on foreign soil.

The fourth instrument of US power is diplomatic manoeuvring, rule-making and breaking influence in international institutions. The neglect of the Global South in the decision-making processes and the denial to China of its role commensurate with its



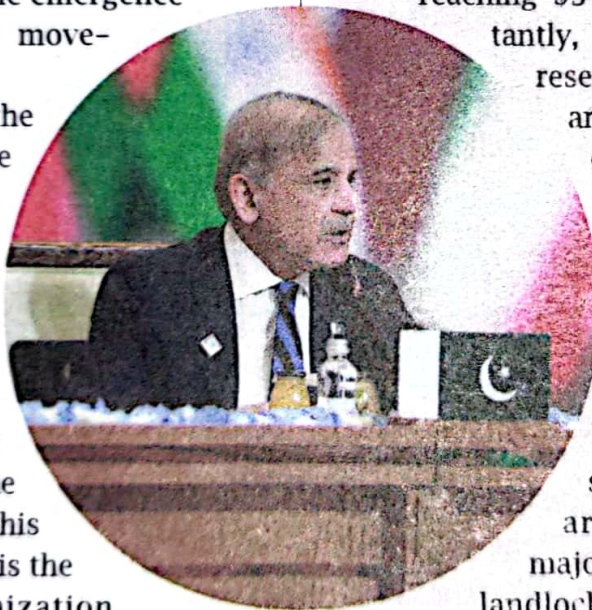
economic power all manifest that the US has carved out an order that provides an enabling environment for safeguarding its interests.

But it is not always rainbows and butterflies. Like every hegemonic power that ruled, such as Spain in the 16th century, the Netherlands in the 17th century and Great Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries, the US hegemonic order has started developing some serious cracks. Economic overextensions, imperial overstretch, geopolitical overreach, a changing technological landscape and shifting norms and values are undermining US hegemony. In 'Exit from Hegemony: The Unraveling of the American Global Order', the authors, Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon, note that three forces play a key role in the rise and fall of hegemonic orders. The first driver of this once-in-a-generation transformation is great-power contestation; the second is the loss of patronage monopoly, and the third is the emergence of transnational counter-order movements.

If we analyze these factors in the light of the contemporary era, we find that all these drivers are working from above, below and within to unravel US hegemony. One of the biggest forces responsible for this tectonic shift is the rise of China and its growing diplomatic, economic and military footprint across the globe. One manifestation of this ever-growing presence of Beijing is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Therefore, a closer examination of this multinational bloc vis-à-vis challenges to US hegemony is worth our attention.

Evolving from the Shanghai Five, comprising China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, the SCO formally entered the world stage in 2001, when Uzbekistan also announced its intention to join it. This organization has gone through extensive expansion, adding Pakistan and India in 2017, Iran in 2023 and most recently Belarus in July 2024. The SCO now has 10 members in its fold, representing 80% of the Eurasian area and 40% of the world's population. The addition of Belarus, a country that supports the Russian invasion of Ukraine, is a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and many international humanitarian laws, but still, it shows that SCO has committed to emerge as multilateral representations of the "new international order" advocated by China and Russia.



The inclusion of Belarus, the first European country in the bloc, also indicates that China wants to strengthen it as a counterweight to the West-dominated world order. The SCO will challenge the US-led liberal world order politically, diplomatically, economically and even normatively. And, there are many ways in which it can challenge US hegemony.

We first start with the economic potential of the SCO. Over the past 23 years, owing to growing integration among SCO member states, the economic significance of this bloc has increased significantly. The member states have a combined GDP of \$23 trillion, which is 25% of the global total. The share of member countries in global trade has also seen massive improvement. As per a report by CGTN, the trade volume of the six initial SCO states was \$667 billion, which rose to \$6.06 trillion in 2020. Similarly, the trade volume between China and other SCO countries is also on the rise, reaching \$343 billion in 2021. More importantly, the vast oil, gas and mineral

reserves of the Central Asian Republics are also a major reason for the huge economic importance of this organization. We have already mentioned that the US economic prowess depends on its ability to influence global trade to impose sanctions. For instance, Russia is facing tough Western sanctions. In this backdrop, the SCO can severely dent the US's ability to arm-twist the countries. The majority of member countries are landlocked, which makes their trade

"closed loop trade". They can, thus, avoid US and EU sanctions in terms of trade settlement and transportation. A closer cooperation also protects their industrial security because Russia and CARs are major suppliers of energy, which makes it harder for the USA to impose crippling sanctions. This, in turn, undermines the US's hegemonic position in international finance.

The use of the dollar as a primary reserve and mutually agreed-upon currency for bilateral and multilateral trade is another pillar of US hegemony that is under threat due to the SCO. Both bilaterally and multilaterally, the SCO member states are implementing plans to scale up local currency settlements and to reduce reliance on the greenback. At the SCO Samarkand Summit in 2022, leaders decided to come up with plans to provide countries with alternative options to avoid the weaponization of the dollar by

Washington. In this regard, the rapidly growing Russia-China trade settlement in local currency serves as an important precedent. The intensity of the push towards de-dollarizing Sino-Russian trade can be gauged from the fact that both countries conducted 60-80% of trade in US dollars in 2018, but, today, more than 92% of trade settlement is conducted in ruble and yuan. Therefore, SCO has the potential to undermine the dollar as a major world reserve and trade currency that, hitherto, has a vital role in sustaining the US hegemonic position.

The role of the US in the IMF and the World Bank allows the US administration to shape economic policies of countries in distress and thus further its geopolitical ambitions. Though not linked to SCO directly, various China-led initiatives, e.g. the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), have provided countries with development assistance and bailout packages without any conditions attached. Many member countries are receiving

civilization, Beijing has announced various initiatives, such as the Global Development Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative - the latter calls for respect for diversity, shared humanity and regular people-to-people exchanges.

In conclusion, there is no denying that the US-led Western world order has started to crumble. All three forces responsible for the rise and fall of hegemonic orders in the past are also operating at full throttle from above, below and within. Russia and China are contesting existing norms and creating spheres of influence through regional institutions such as the SCO, BRICS, AIIB and the likes. Similarly, the US is also losing its 'patronage monopoly' because weaker states are looking towards China for alternative economic and military support without any liberal economic or political conditions. Finally, the rise of ultra-nationalist and far-right political parties across the globe, and even within the USA, is also undermining



BRI investments, e.g. Pakistan and CARs. The closer integration due to multiple infrastructure-building projects would further promote intra-SCO trade, which would, in turn, prepare SCO economies to wean themselves off bailout packages and development assistance from the IMF and the World Bank.

The SCO in general, and China and Russia in particular, are also posing normative challenges to US hegemony. Both these states are trying to provide alternative political values and norms that are antithetical to Western values. The order championed by China advocates multipolarity not only in terms of political and military dominance but also in terms of respect for other civilizations. Chinese are of the view that Western liberal values are not universal; each nation and each culture has its own peculiarities and they should be allowed to develop their own political, economic, social and legal institutions as per their own unique customs and values. To formalize this conception and pose a normative challenge to Western

the liberal order. The SCO and other such multinational organizations are spearheading this epic transformation and power transition. But we should also bear in mind that the SCO is still in a formative phase; it has yet to perform on the world stage as per its potential. SCO member countries must work closely and interact frequently to make sure that this organization improves the economic conditions of member countries. Though Beijing and Moscow are projecting SCO as a counterweight to US hegemony, they have a long way to go before exploiting its fullest potential. One can hope that these organizations engage in competition, not contestation, and promote economic integration, not exclusive alliances, for the better future of our coming generations.■

The writer is a graduate of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. He writes on national and international affairs.



Srebrenica and Gaza

A tale of two genocides

Attia Farooqi

On 11th July, the United Nations commemorated the Srebrenica Genocide of 1995 with official statements and speeches by dignitaries, memorial services and designating a day for remembering "the greatest atrocity in modern Europe". What is ironic, however, is the fact that the world comes together to remember Srebrenica in the midst of another harrowing genocide - one that is live-streamed straight into every waking moment, all over the world. The legacy of Srebrenica remains profound. It serves as a stark reminder of the horrors of ethnic hatred and the failure of international institutions to prevent genocide. However, echoes of this horror resonate in Gaza today, where innocent civilians endure a comparable nightmare of suffering.

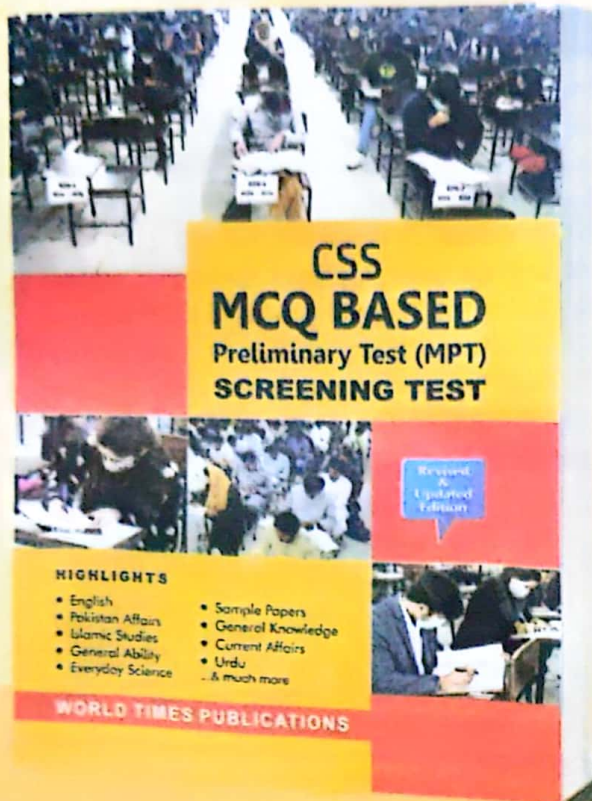
The genocidal project in Gaza is unfolding on a much larger scale, having persisted for 10 months. This time, the silence of the so-called civilized West comes with military and rhetorical support. Freedom of speech and the right to protest have been severely curtailed. University campuses teeming with students protesting the Israeli genocide project are now under threat, with numerous arrests and incidents of excessive police violence signalling the erosion of liberal principles in the so-called civilized West.

Despite the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) interim rulings in the case brought by South Africa against Israel, around 800,000 displaced Palestinians in Rafah are left vulnerable to Israeli attacks, struggling to survive without humanitarian aid. Just as tens of thousands of Bosnian civilians were abandoned to the mercy of Dutchbat and subsequently massacred, innocent Gazans are now being herded by relentless evacuation orders, only to face deadly airstrikes. Moreover, Israel's use of torture and disabling tactics mirrors the brutal actions once inflicted on Bosnians at the infamous Vilina Vlas Hotel in Višegrad. Tragically, this symbol of genocidal cruelty still operates as a hotel today.

Despite occurring in different times and geographies,

Srebrenica and Gaza share striking similarities. History is replete with unlearned lessons and international bodies striving to rid global peace of crimes against humanity continue to fall short of their objectives. The system, driven by nation-states' self-interest and reducing morality to mere power dynamics, failed to prevent the Rwandan Genocide in 1992 and the Srebrenica Genocide in 1995. This failure led to the birth of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm. However, R2P has sometimes been misused rather than upholding its principles, leading to further atrocities. The 2011 intervention in Libya is a case in point, where actions under the R2P banner far exceeded their mandate, drawing serious criticism. For those moral arbiters who write human rights and freedom reports and decide whether a country deserves foreign aid or investment based on these subjective evaluations, understanding Srebrenica and Gaza is challenging. The former has long been relegated to the dusty shelves of history. At the same time, the latter is labelled a counterterrorism endeavour that began on Oct. 7, devoid of any historical context and subject to one-sided assessments. This highlights a significant impasse among international actors, as they cannot even agree on common moral grounds. In a world rife with disagreements and conflicts, the call for a new order gaining traction in the public conscience and manifesting in public demonstrations is something that must be embraced. This may be the only way to become rightful and conscientious witnesses to a process that may be understood in the future. Whether criticisms directed at a self-interested, power-obsessed system can give birth to a more just and peaceful order remains uncertain, but in the face of barbarism, choosing indifference is to side with the oppressor and forsake the oppressed. ■

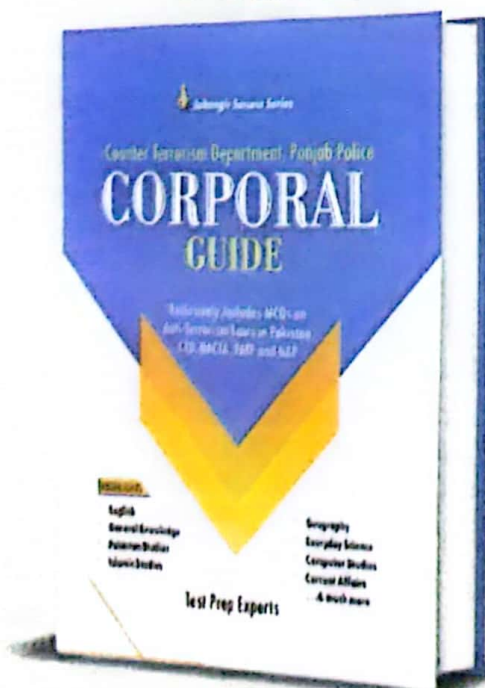
The writer is an academic.



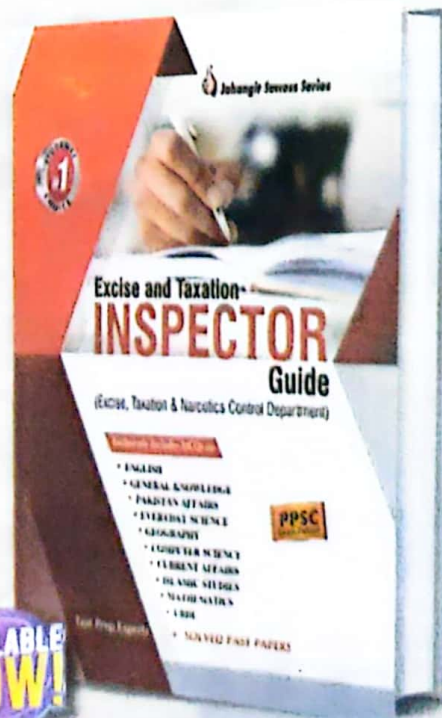
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During the recent decades, rapid technical transformations have completely upended the ways people interact, communicate and access information. This rapid advancement of digital technologies has enabled people to possess the entirety of human knowledge in the palm of their hands, and news and information can ricochet around the world in a matter of seconds. This proliferation of digital technology has enabled pathways for false or manipulated information to be created, disseminated and amplified by various actors for political, ideological or commercial motives at a scale, speed and reach never known before. However, this often leads to the spread of disinformation. Although it is not a new phenomenon, the scale of the problem has reached a new level in our digital era. Current discussions on disinformation reflect a new and rapidly evolving communications landscape, in part due to innovative technologies that enable the dissemination of unparalleled volumes of content at unprecedented speeds.

What is disinformation?

While misinformation refers to the accidental spread of inaccurate information, disinformation is not only inaccurate but also intends to deceive and is spread in order to do serious harm.

Disinformation can be spread by state or non-state actors. It can affect a broad range of human rights, undermining responses to public policies or amplifying tensions in

Technological advances have revolutionized communications, connecting people on a previously unthinkable scale. They have supported communities in times of crisis, elevated marginalized voices and helped mobilize global movements for racial justice and gender equality. However, these same advances have enabled the spread of disinformation to counter which United Nations Secretary General António Guterres launched, on June 24, global principles that call on tech companies, advertisers, media and other key players to refrain from using, supporting or amplifying disinformation and hate speech.

times of emergency or armed conflict.

There is no universally accepted definition of disinformation. Perhaps because no one definition may be sufficient on its own, given the multiple and different contexts in which concerns over disinformation may arise, including with regard to issues as diverse as electoral process, public health, armed conflicts or climate change.

Background

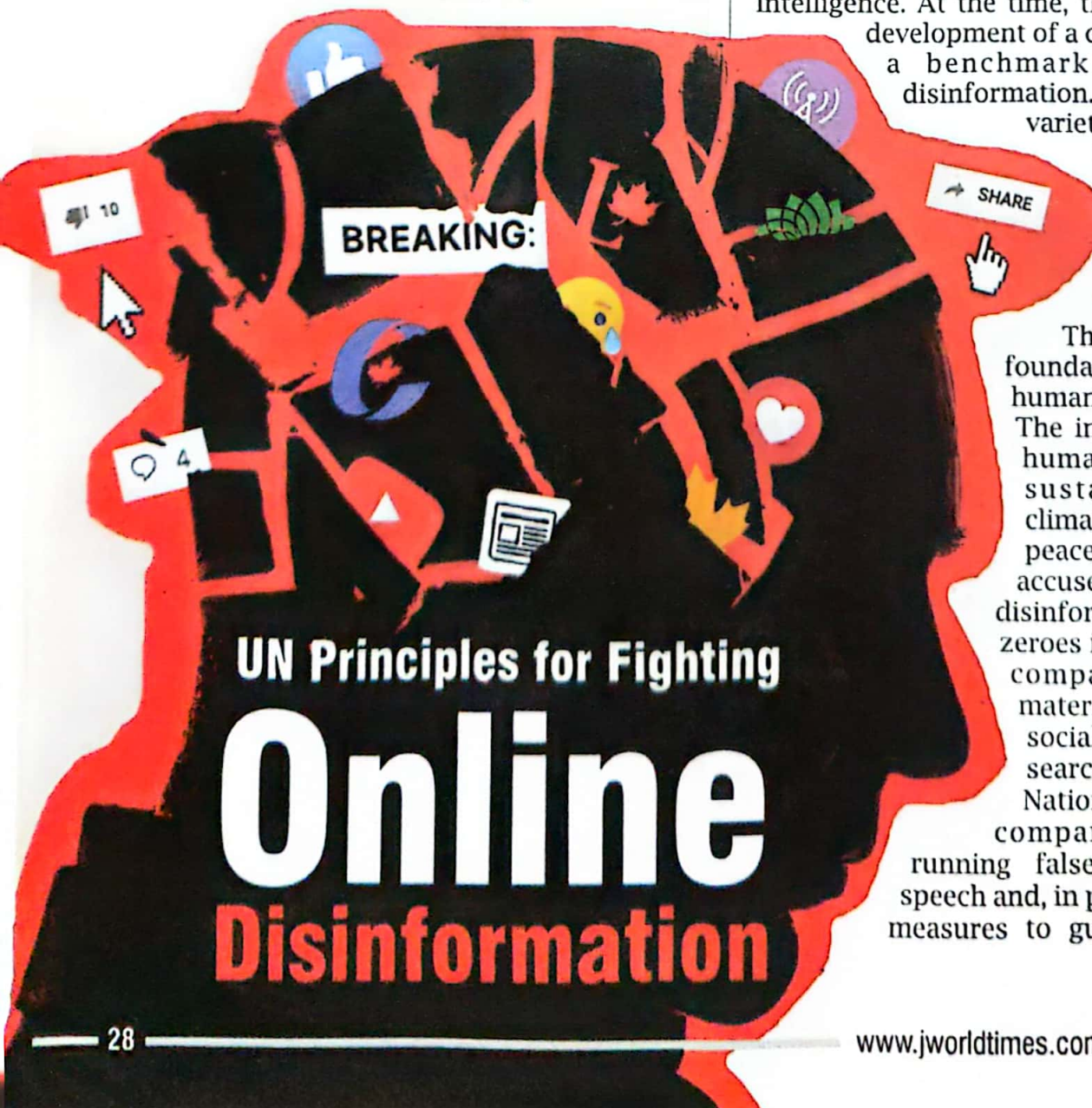
In 2023, UN Secretary-General warned that online disinformation posed an existential risk to humanity and said this was so even before the advent of artificial intelligence. At the time, the UN chief proposed the

development of a code of conduct to serve as a benchmark for fighting online disinformation. After consultations with a variety of actors in the field, the

United Nations has now published broad principles — although with no enforcement mechanisms.

What are the principles?

These principles form the foundation of a vision for a more humane information ecosystem. The initiative aims to prioritise human rights and support sustainable development, climate action, democracy and peace. While some countries are accused of being sources of disinformation, the UN document zeroes in particularly on Big Tech companies that allow this material to spread, such as social media platforms and search engines. The United Nations is now calling on these companies to refrain from running false information and hate speech and, in particular, to take stronger measures to guarantee the accuracy of



"At a time when billions of people are exposed to false narratives, distortions and lies, these principles lay out a clear path forward, firmly rooted in human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and opinion."

— UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

information during election campaigns.

The five principles are as under:

1. Societal Trust and Resilience: Building societal trust and resilience to counteract the spread of misinformation and hate speech.

2. Independent, Free, and Pluralistic Media: Ensuring media independence, freedom and diversity to support high-quality journalism and diverse viewpoints.

3. Healthy Incentives: Creating incentives that promote truthful and constructive content while discouraging the spread of harmful misinformation.

4. Transparency and Research: Enhancing transparency and supporting research to understand and mitigate the impact of misinformation and to develop effective solutions.

5. Public Empowerment: Empowering the public with the tools and knowledge to critically assess information, protect their rights and participate in the information ecosystem responsibly.

The Proposals

The proposals include:

- Governments, tech companies, advertisers, media and other stakeholders should refrain from using, supporting or amplifying disinformation and hate speech for any purpose.
- Governments should provide timely access to information, guarantee a free, viable, independent and plural media landscape and ensure strong protections for journalists, researchers and civil society.
- Tech companies should ensure safety and privacy by design in all products, alongside consistent application of policies and resources across countries

and languages, with particular attention to the needs of those groups often targeted online. They should elevate crisis response and take measures to support information integrity around elections.

- All stakeholders involved in the development of AI technologies should take urgent, immediate, inclusive and transparent measures to ensure that all AI applications are designed, deployed and used safely, securely, responsibly and ethically, and uphold human rights.
- Tech companies should scope business models that do not rely on programmatic advertising and do not prioritize engagement above human rights, privacy and safety, allowing users greater choice and control over their online experience and personal data.
- Advertisers should demand transparency in digital advertising processes from the tech sector to help ensure that ad budgets do not inadvertently fund disinformation or hate or undermine human rights.
- Tech companies and AI developers should ensure meaningful transparency and allow researchers and academics access to data while respecting user privacy, commission publicly available independent audits and co-develop industry accountability frameworks.
- Government, tech companies, AI developers and advertisers should take special measures to protect and empower children, with governments providing resources for parents, guardians and educators. ▢

The writer is a CSS aspirant.

DIS INFORMATION

Key terms:

Term	Definition	Example
Misinformation	False or inaccurate information is spread without malicious intent.	A person shares an outdated news article about a natural disaster, believing it to be a current event.
Disinformation	Deliberately false information is spread with the intent to deceive or mislead.	A fake news website publishes a fabricated story claiming a political candidate has committed a crime to sway public opinion against them.
Hate Speech	Any speech, gesture, conduct, writing or display which may incite violence or prejudicial action.	A social media post using derogatory terms to incite hatred against a particular ethnic group or religious community.

WAR

on Palestine

Western leaders are
destroying humanity

Mahboob Khawaja, PhD



Is NATO celebrating its 75th year of existence or is it averting its failure to meet new challenges to warn Russia, China, North Korea and Iran?

Was the gathering in Washington, DC, more to watch the suitability of Biden for the American presidency or recap its weaknesses to forge new animosities? NATO itself is a quagmire of contradictions and triviality in practice. There is no rational argument to converge peace in Ukraine, and warmongering offers no optimism for change. NATO lacks basic principles of human equality and moral and institutional integrity. When Russia is accused of bombing Ukraine's children's hospitals and civilian hubs, it is a 'crime against humanity' and 'genocide'. But, when Israel bombs hospitals, places of worship and innocent civilians in Gaza, NATO and the EU do not view it as a 'crime against humanity' and 'genocide'. The United Nations (UN), the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) blame Israel and the United States (US) for direct complicity in these grave crimes against humanity. But still, the US supplies all weapons to Israel, which are used to kill innocent people and destroy Palestine. When perverted interest demands, NATO violates its mission and the limits of reason and responsibility to intervene in wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia and any situation considered vital to their collective strategic interest. Ten months into the war in Gaza, millions are forcibly displaced, schools and hospitals



continue to be bombed and razed to the ground, more than 38,000 innocent civilian women, children and elderly were killed by design, and some 15,000 or more children and women are still buried under the rubble. Many call for urgent attention by global humanity to 'save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war' if there is any global conscience and morality still alive and intact. The 33 leaders at the NATO summit in July 2024 never fought any wars, as they are just imposters to mislead their people and the informed masses of the global community. Their presence is a symbolic overture to the US. They appear more robotic, just like the stooges of Arab-Muslim leaders, than normal human beings.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) – the most powerful pro-Israel lobbying group that advocates its policies to the legislative and executive branches of the United States – offers money to the US presidential candidates to help them win the race. Their policies and practices in support of Israel and its wars are the same and competitive in scope. Often, oil-exporting Arab countries' leaders (e.g. those of Saudi Arabia and the UAE) have contributed millions of dollars to US leadership campaigns without receiving any favour. Western leaders view them as subservient puppets – 'camel' jockeys' and nothing else. The Arab-



Death toll in Palestine's Gaza could exceed

186,000

Recent study estimates the number of indirect deaths from causes such as diseases and the deliberate destruction or blockade of resources significantly raises the official toll of 38,193.

Muslim leaders live in the dark ages, just puppets of the US. The Egyptian, Saudi, Emirati and other nations' leaders maintain friendly ties with Israel and have invested in Israeli technological manufacturing industries to keep Netanyahu happy and safe. Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is under the threat of an "arrest warrant" by the ICC, and the ICJ alleges crimes against humanity, but the US Congress, lacking any moral credibility after the 2003 Iraq war, invited Netanyahu to speak - on July 24, 2024. One wonders what a despotic figure would speak about. The Israeli masses appear outraged against the continued war on Gaza. The daily civilian protests call for the resignation of Netanyahu and an immediate ceasefire in Gaza to return the 120 hostages.

The US and Israel appear isolated and more of a portrait of vices, deception and injustice that degrade humanity within the universe. They are afraid of the unknown future. The Earth is a divine hub for human life, survival and trust. Those bombing and destroying the Earth are mentally sick and defy the Divine Truth. It looks as if the US and Israeli leaders do not believe in life and death and accountability. The Earth is a "trust" to mankind for its existence, sustenance of life, survival, progress and future-making. Wherever there is trust, there is accountability. The Divine warning (Al-Quran; 7:56) warns:

Do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order. And call upon Him with hope and fear. Indeed, Allah's mercy is always close to the good-doers. And killing of innocent people is prohibited in the Ten Commandments (Torah):

'Thou shalt not kill' (Exod. 20:13; also Deut. 5:17).

Jewish law views the shedding of innocent blood very seriously and lists murder as one of three sins (along with idolatry and sexual immorality), that fall under the category of *yehareg ve'al ya'avor* - meaning "One should let himself be killed rather than violate it.

To glance ahead, it seems that the Western world failed to see a dreadful tragic history in the making of the end of time and a loss of ingenuity to understand the consequences of the naive egoism of Israeli leadership in making war an instrument of territorial expansion in the Arab Middle East. A rationally arguable conclusion to the war on Gaza was perceivable had there been a unified political-military challenge to the Israeli plans by the Arab-Muslim world. That landscape appears morally, intellectually and politically bankrupt as a scum floating on a torrent of naive puppets and discredited leaders. The American-

Israeli collaborative war on Gaza and its immediate consequences made the Western world and all of its institutions shamefully redundant and void in the 21st-century global norms of civility, human rights, freedom, justice and safety of civilians - whereas crimes against humanity are captured in obscure impulses, indecision and deliberate inaction by the UN Security Council. The Western news media ignored the coverage of Israeli 'genocidal' acts against the masses in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

If Israel is not stopped, the leading Arab states will soon fly Israeli-American flags for a change. The Israeli-American denial of crimes against humanity, "genocide" in Gaza and forcible expulsion of millions represent a ferocious conception of right and wrong and how irrational the leadership tends to be in real-world affairs. Political cynicism is endemic and global leaders appear mentally and morally lost without any accountability to the informed global community seeking an end to the war and returning peace to the Middle East. What a shame and what a disgrace that Arab-Muslim countries have armies and resources but no responsible leaders who would not act to defend people's freedom, rights, dignity and sustainable future. ■

Dr. Mahboob A. Khawaja specializes in international affairs-global security, peace and conflict resolution with keen interests in Islamic-Western comparative cultures and civilizations, and is the author of several publications including the latest: One Humanity and the Remaking of Global Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution. Germany.

Biden steps aside. What happens next?

Joe Biden on Sunday withdrew from the 2024 presidential election race. Biden endorsed Vice-President Kamala Harris to be the Democratic nominee. Here's what you need to know

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

- Biden has accrued nearly 4,000 Democratic delegates by winning primary elections. Those delegates would have normally voted for him to be the party's official presidential nominee at the Democratic National Convention, which is to take place from August 19-22.
- After Biden's withdrawal, the Democratic National Committee rules do not bind or force them to do so. Delegates can now vote with their conscience, which means they could throw their vote to someone else.



WHO COULD REPLACE BIDEN?

Harris is at the top of the list, but she has had her own problems after a rocky start as vice-president and poor polling numbers. California Governor Gavin Newsom, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, and Illinois Governor JB Pritzker have all been floated as possible replacements.

HOW WILL A NOMINEE BE CHOSEN?

- According to Ballotpedia, there are expected to be some 4,672 delegates in 2024, including 3,933 pledged delegates and 739 so-called superdelegates — senior party members.
- In order to secure the nomination, a candidate would need to get a majority — that is, more votes than all the others combined. That's what Harris' allies are trying to do right now — secure the pledged support of 1,969 delegates, and shut down any competition.

WHAT HAPPENS TO CAMPAIGN CASH?

\$91mn

The Biden-Harris campaign had \$91 million in the bank at the end of May, but experts on campaign finance law disagree on how readily the money could change hands.

Because Harris is also on the campaign filing documents, many experts believe the money could be transferred over to her if she is on the ticket.

leaderspeak

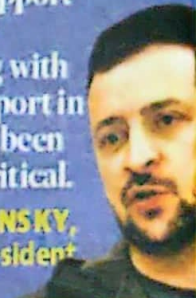
I respect President [Joe] Biden's decision and I look forward to us working together during the remainder of his presidency.

— KEIR STARMER,
British Prime Minister



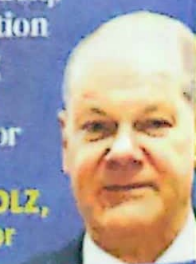
Ukraine is grateful to President Biden for his unwavering support for Ukraine's fight for freedom, which, along with strong bipartisan support in the United States, has been and continues to be critical.

— VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY,
Ukraine President



Thanks to him [Joe Biden], transatlantic cooperation is close. Nato is strong and the USA is a good and reliable partner for us.

— OLAF SCHOLZ,
German chancellor



I recognise that President Biden made the decision from the standpoint of what was best politically. Needless to say, the Japan-US alliance is the pillar of Japan's diplomacy and security, so we'll closely watch the future developments.

— FUMIO KISHIDA,
Japanese Prime Minister



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**BIDEN
HARRIS**

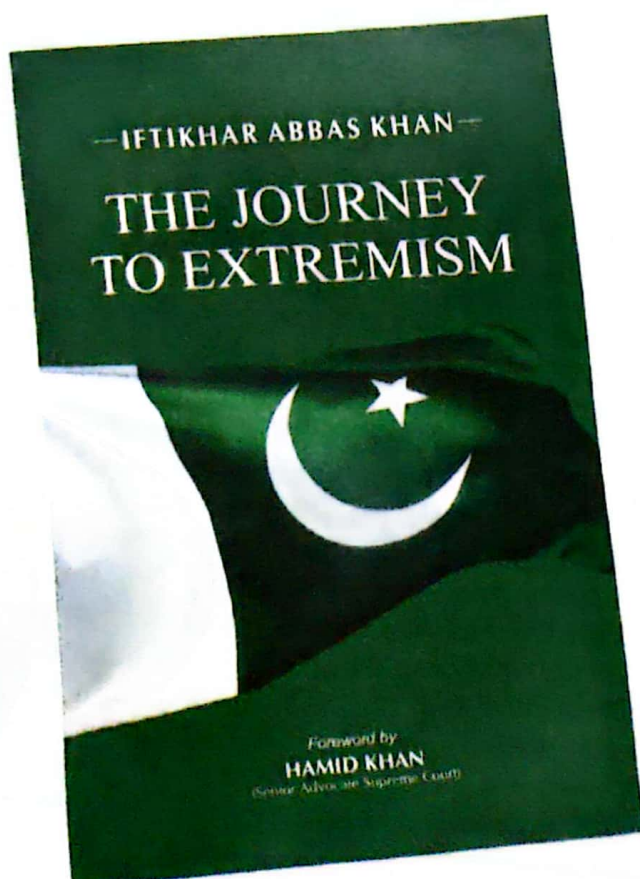
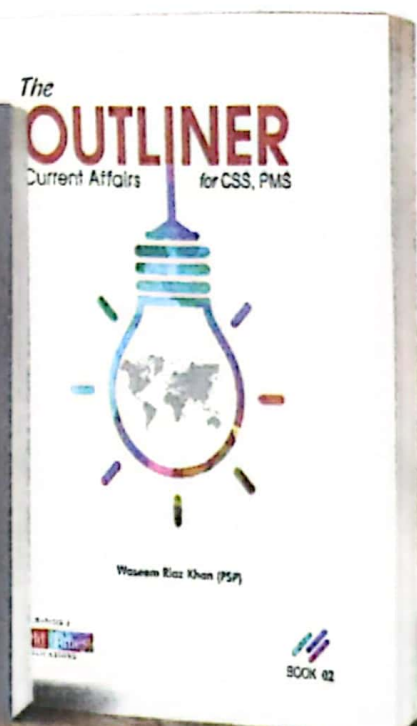
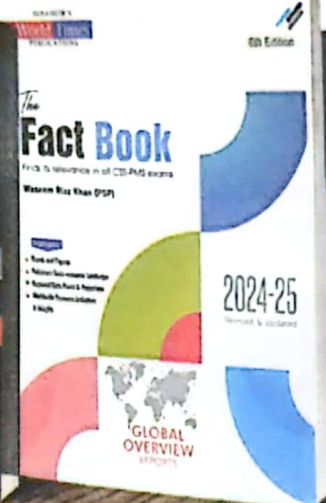
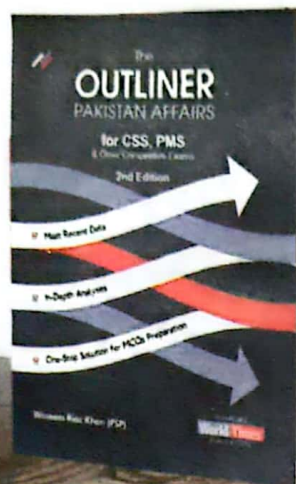


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Police Investigations and the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Case

The opinion of the Supreme Court on the constitutional reference sent by the President of Pakistan has been rendered (PLD 2024 SC 509). It makes a scathing criticism of the criminal proceedings and takes into account many a theme that has been in the discourse on the case for long. For example, the opinion discussed, in detail, the consequences of leapfrogging the criminal processes by the constitutional Lahore High Court, which opted to hold trial of the case itself instead of leaving the matter to the Sessions Court (the competent court having the jurisdiction in the case). Likewise, it was noted that by doing so, the important statutory safeguard of confirmation of death penalty under Section 376 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Code) was bypassed, denying the accused both a forum of appeal and an opportunity to defend against the confirmation of death penalty as envisaged in the law. Quintessentially, the opinion is trial-centric and has focused more on the role of judges in the court and less on the pre-trial mechanics that took place prior to the adjudication. This piece highlights the issues related to police investigation that affected the final outcome of the case of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB).

It may be noted that under the extant legal framework, the right to investigate a criminal case solely rests with the police/investigation agency. This point is almost written in stone insofar as the law is concerned. It has a statutory basis in Section 4(l) of the Code that ordains 'collection of evidence by police' as 'criminal

investigation'. In case the evidence is collected by anyone other than police, it is to be brought on the case file through a formal and legal process called the Police Professional Work (PPW), in police parlance. The statutory role of police at the crime scene is protected under Rule 25.33 of the Punjab Police Rules, 1934 (Police Rules). Even the forensic evidence collected through the staff of a forensic science agency (like the Punjab Forensic Science Agency established under the Punjab Forensic Science Agency Act, 2007) has to process it as declared in a judgement of the Lahore High Court that interpreted Section 4 of the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA) and held that the technical and forensic staff can seek clarification from the police officer who collected the evidence, but cannot, himself collect the evidence. The judiciary has always distanced itself from the function of investigation, as it is purely an executive function. The principle was articulated by Justice Porter in his speech in the Emperor vs. Kh Nazir Case ((1945) 27 BOMLR 245), and has been favourably followed and cited by the courts since. This point was discussed briefly in the opinion of the court, but not with the required thrust. In the case of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB), the police were not able to solve the murder case as shown by the record of the case. Besides, the poor evaluation of the evidence of the case, the case suffered from many problems related to the investigation. Some of the chief issues were:

a. The crime scene was not properly inspected. The

Kamran Adil

police only recorded the statement of the complainant and did not take pain to associate other eye-witnesses to maximize the information for the investigation of the case.

b. As noted in the opinion, no genuine forensic evidence was collected. Even the spent casings collected from the crime scene did not match the weapon of offence attributed to the perpetrators of crime by the Federal Security Force (FSF). A very dangerous inference was drawn by assuming that the weapons were substituted on the behest of ZAB. The negative report of forensics should have been transformed into a benefit of doubt and the capital punishment should not have been awarded.

c. The administration of investigation in the form of its entrustment and transfer from one agency to another

while looking at the powers of police officers posted in CIA, held in the case of State vs. Bashir (PLD 1997 SCMR 408) that its officers were not police officers in terms of Section 4(p) of the Code. Owing to this fact, the Punjab Police amended the Police Order, 2002, in 2024 to add new article 18-B to the Police Order, 2002, to allow the Organized Crime Units (OCU) to investigate criminal cases.

d. Likewise, the change of investigation from provincial police to the federal police was not fully appreciated in the opinion. How a murder case was entrusted to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) established under the Federal Investigation Agency Act, 1974, is yet to be addressed. The consequences of blatant violations of administrative and procedural safeguards were not discussed in the opinion.



was also not as per law. The role of senior police officers (gazette officers) through their supervision, as noted in Rule 25.17 of the Police Rules was not considered in the case. The transfer of investigation from local police to the Central Intelligence Agency (which is mistakenly stated as the Central Investigation Agency) was not documented and was not transparent. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is a product of the Police Rules and is established under Rule 21.35 of the Police Rules. The CIA is just an intelligence wing of the police with the mandate to provide information about inter-district crimes. Since long, the CIA has not been working as per its legal mandate as contained in Police Rules. The legal position of the CIA was not discussed in the opinion. For record, it may be stated that the Supreme Court,

The aforementioned points are not exhaustive and only highlight broad areas that must be noted for reform of the criminal justice system. The ZAB case was symptomatic of the system that is experienced by citizens on a daily basis, though in different form. The inadequacies of the criminal justice system must be fixed at the earliest, as internal security is mirrored by peace, truth and fairness. The judiciary in Pakistan has spoken in unison and has declared the truth; now, the burden is on all segments of society to complement the effort by telling their part of the truth and to work to improve and reform the system for posterity. ■

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FIVE-YEAR Plans in Pakistan

An Overview

The Government of Pakistan recently embarked on crafting a detailed five-year strategy aimed at rejuvenating key economic sectors. Aimed at transforming the economic situation of the country, this strategic blueprint, which has been shared by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif with all the relevant ministries, involves setting five-year targets across various sectors, including IT, agriculture, industries, energy and reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), ease of doing business, etc. In this article, the author has embarked on exploring various aspects of the five-year plans introduced in Pakistan in the past.



The Government of Pakistan has been implementing Five-Year Plans to introduce and implement policies for accelerating agricultural productivity and industrial development. The concept of planning was, in fact, introduced with the Colombo Plan in 1950. The first (1955-1960) and second (1960-1965) Five-Year Plans refined this concept

and established the institutions through which planning could be effectively implemented. Here is a brief overview of the Five-Year Plans Pakistan has implemented in its history.

1. First Five-Year Plan (1955-1960)

This Plan was launched to target the development of agriculture in terms of the provision of a secure food supply within the country for the growing population and to make a substantial beginning through research and extension programs and the provision of fertilizers, equipment, pesticides and so on, towards more diversified and more valuable agricultural output. It also aimed at enhancing banking and financial services and focusing on heavy industry.

2. Second Five-Year Plan (1960-1965)

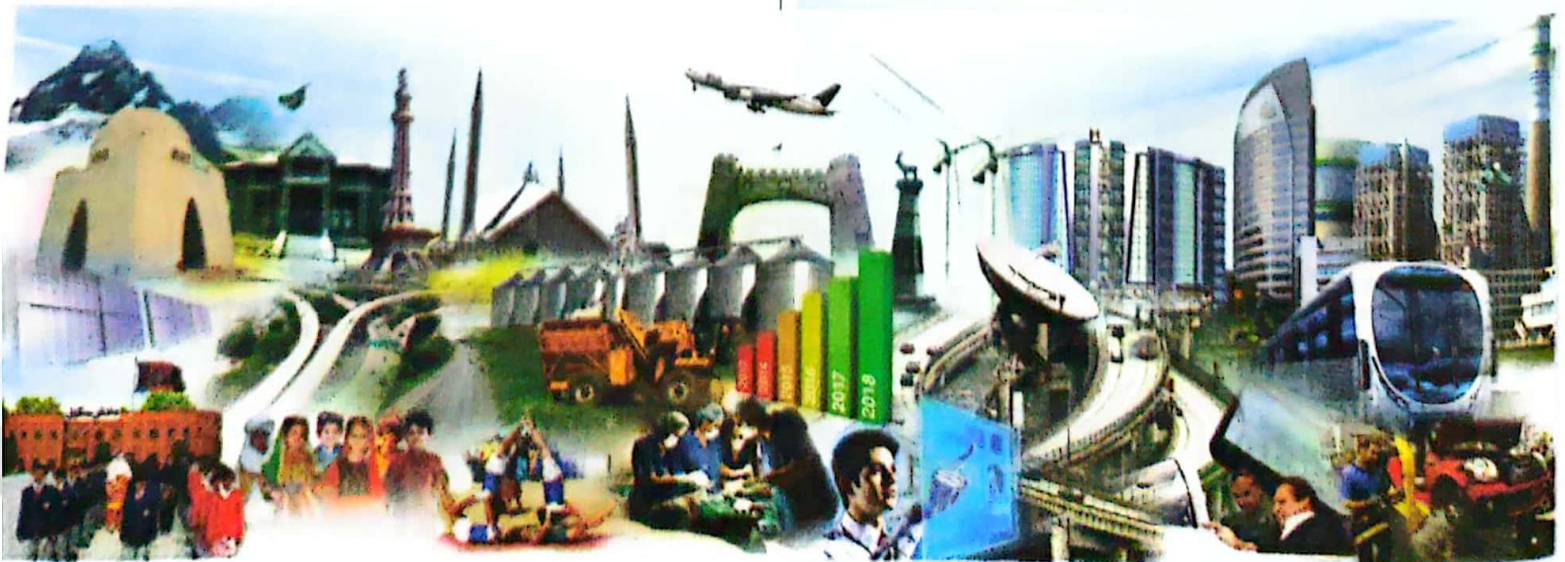
It prioritized heavy industrial development and advancement in science and literature. It also attached the highest priority to agriculture by setting the target of self-sufficiency in food grains within the Plan period, while assigning great importance to the role of agriculture as a source of national income, employment and raw materials for export as well as domestic use.

3. Third Five-Year Plan (1965-1970)

It aimed at accelerating the transformation in agriculture by placing the highest priority on measures to increase per-acre yield and by maintaining strong farm incentives and subsidies to ensure maximum realization of the farmers' resources, besides carrying out the development initiatives of the previous Five-Year Plans. It emphasized investment in infrastructure and industrialization to rehabilitate the economy after the War of 1965.

4. Fourth Five-Year Plan (1970-1975)

This Plan aimed at achieving the objectives for agricultural development, such as the use of advanced technology along with efficient use of land, labour and other resources; achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency in food grains as well as the



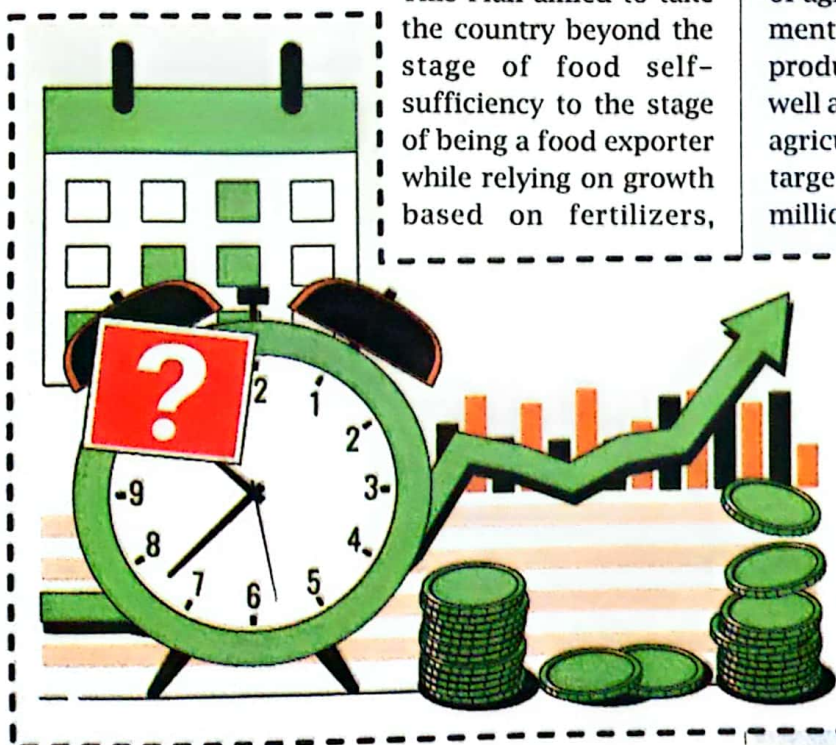
enhancing the production of protein-rich foods in order to meet the people's nutritional needs more effectively; increasing the production of agricultural raw materials; developing food grain exports from West Pakistan and broadening the distribution of farm income. However, the Plan was abandoned after the separation of East Pakistan in December 1971. Agriculture remained the largest sector of the economy in terms of output, employment, contribution to exports during the period from 1960 to 1970. However, the momentum of development in this sector could not be maintained on account of various factors, including the politico-economic conditions that prevailed from 1970 to 1972, unfavourable weather conditions, heavy floods in 1973 and 1976 and substantial and frequent increases in the prices of inputs, particularly fertilizers in the international market between 1972 and 1974.

5. Fifth Five-Year Plan (1978-1983)

The Fifth Five-Year Plan aimed at stabilizing the economy through different interventions. It emphasized rapid agricultural development based on efficient utilization of land, manpower and water resources and intensive use of inputs, as well as the creation of institutions supporting continued progress. The target for agriculture growth was set at 6%; however, growth in this sector was recorded at 4% during the period of the Plan. Increasing defence expenditures and deregulating the economy were other objectives associated with this plan.

6. Sixth Five-Year Plan (1983-1988)

This Plan aimed to take the country beyond the stage of food self-sufficiency to the stage of being a food exporter while relying on growth based on fertilizers,



water and farm technologies in small-farm production, both for exports (wheat, rice, fruits, vegetables, flowers, poultry and meat) and for imports (oilseeds and dairy products). Besides, increasing investment, reducing reliance on imported energy and increasing expenditure on health and education were other objectives. However, the growth in agriculture during the period of the Plan was recorded at 3.8%, instead of the 4.9% growth as was the target.

7. Seventh Five-Year Plan (1988-1993)

The Seventh Five-Year Plan intended to promote sustainable growth and development in the agriculture sector through an increase in the production of major crops (wheat, rice, sugarcane and cotton) by employing improved agricultural practices, better seed varieties and efficient use of fertilizers and pesticides. It emphasized development of the electricity sector and deregulation of the corporate sector. Expansion and improvement of irrigation infrastructure and water management to ensure adequate water supply for agricultural purposes were also emphasized. The growth target for agriculture was set at 4.7% (4% for major crops and 5.5% for minor crops). However, the performance of the agriculture sector during the Plan period faced challenges of overall economic and political instability, adverse weather conditions, heavy floods in 1988 and 1992 and an economic slowdown in global markets. The growth in the agriculture sector was, thus, recorded at 3.8%.

8. Eighth Five-Year Plan (1993-1998)

It outlined the policies for the integrated management of agriculture, irrigation and drainage, input management and research linkages for enhanced crop production, soil management and use of fertilizer, as well as integrated pest management. The target set for agriculture growth was 4.9%. The rice-production target was set at 31% (from 3.25 million tons to 4.25 million tons). However, the performance of the agriculture sector actually fell short of this target and average growth rate recorded at 3.9%. Further, the Plan emphasized promoting public-private partnerships and the development of physical infrastructure.

9. The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1998-2003)

It laid emphasis on economic growth and development. Moreover, it emphasized enhancing growth in the agriculture sector and the production of major crops to attain food and nutritional security, sustainable agricultural practices and efficient water usage. However, this plan could not materialize due to a change of government as Prime

Minister Nawaz Sharif was ousted in a military coup on Oct. 12, 1999.

10. Tenth Five-Year Plan (2010-2015)

This Plan outlined key objectives for the agriculture sector, such as enhanced production of crops, like wheat, rice, sugarcane and cotton, through the use of high-yielding varieties of seeds, efficient water management by adopting the latest technologies and improved fertilizer and pest-management services, post-harvest management by improving storage facilities and capacity, strengthening agricultural research and extension services and enhanced market access. The agriculture sector experienced variable growth rates during this period, with an average rate of 2.5-3.0%.

11. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2013-2018)

The Plan outlined comprehensive objectives and targets for the agriculture sector aligning with the broader goals of Vision 2025, including improved production of major crops through better inputs and technology, investments from both the public and private sectors for enhanced agricultural productivity and food security, strengthening of infrastructure and efficient management of water, fertilizer and agro-chemicals, besides initiatives to reduce rural poverty through income generation for small farmers. The target for agricultural growth was set at 4.5%;

however, varied growth rates were recorded during the Plan period, with an average growth rate of 2.5-3.5% due to numerous challenges, including water scarcity, climate change impacts and a deficiency in infrastructure.

12. Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2018-23)

On 29 May 2019, the National Economic Council (NEC) approved the 12th Five-Year Plan which envisaged an average GDP growth rate of 5%, increasing exports from \$24.8 billion to \$34 billion, curtailing imports to \$65 billion and creating 10 million jobs. The NEC approved the average GDP growth target of 5% along with sectoral average growth rates of agriculture (3.2%), industry (5.1%) and services (5.6%) for 2018-23.

13. Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (2024-2029)

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently presented comprehensive roadmap for the country's economic resurgence over the next five years. This strategic blueprint will focus on critical areas such as curbing inflation, alleviating poverty and creating jobs. The PM advised that steps should be taken on a priority basis to speed up progress in the sectors of agriculture, livestock, information technology, foreign investment and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The prime minister said tax revenue would be increased with digitalization and technology, while per-acre yields in the agriculture sector would also be increased with the use of technology. The loss-making government institutions would be

privatized on a priority basis, he added.

Under the agriculture strategy, farmers in rural areas would be provided direct subsidy so that they could arrange fertilizers. This would be a departure from the existing subsidy regime that provides cheap gas to manufacturers who pass on the benefit to farmers only partially and keep the remainder with them to earn profits.

Likewise, farmers in rural areas would be provided quality seeds directly through world-renowned producers for increased productivity to remove middlemen and monopolistic seed companies charging heavy costs to

consumers. On top of this, these farmers would be facilitated in operating their tube wells on solar energy.

Conclusion

Five-Year Plans played a crucial role in the economic development of Pakistan through infrastructure development, industrial growth, increased access to education and healthcare facilities, etc. However, all objectives associated with the Plans could not be achieved due to a number of factors, such as political instability, lack of resources, overdependence on foreign aid, etc. ■

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PAKISTAN NEEDS BIOFUELS



The way to achieve energy security

Energy is inarguably one of the most important inputs for economic growth that can sustain industrial and commercial activities. Undoubtedly, energy security — the uninterrupted availability of energy at affordable prices — has emerged as one of the utmost pressing concerns confronting Pakistan in the present day. Biofuel, as a renewable energy source, can help cut the country's reliance on imported fuels, consequently enhancing the nation's energy security.

Shahzad Malik

The critical state of Pakistan's energy sector is a primary constraint on the country's economic development. Ensuring reliable and uninterrupted access to energy resources is the most pressing need to run the country's industries and many other related sectors. However, it is quite ironic that despite having a significant young workforce, experts and abundant natural resources such as minerals, agriculture, mountains, rivers, forests and four seasons, Pakistan primarily relies on imported energy which, in turn, eats up a major chunk of the country's foreign exchange reserves. So, there is an urgent need to accelerate Pakistan's energy diversification efforts. Pakistan, in this quest, needs to focus on promoting alternative energy sources of which biofuels can be of great help in reducing the country's dependence on costly imported fuels.

What are biofuels?

Biofuels are defined as fuels made from organic materials such as plants, crops and animal manure, offering a persuasive and eco-friendly alternative to traditional fossil fuels. These energy sources are created from biomass, including plants, agricultural residues, green growth and crops.

Renewable biofuels emerge as a crucial catalyst in the reduction of carbon emissions by up to 90%, confirming their crucial role in the shift to a more sustainable and ecologically aware world.

Sources

Sugarcane, corn and soybeans are among the major

sources currently used to produce biofuels. Crops used to make biofuels are generally either high in sugar (such as sugarcane, sugarbeet, and sweet sorghum), starch (such as maize and tapioca) or oils (such as soybean, rapeseed, coconut, sunflower). The energy produced with these fuels, or by burning biomass directly, is called bioenergy.

Major Types

A. Bioethanol

It is derived from corn and sugarcane using the fermentation process. A litre of ethanol contains approximately two-thirds of the energy provided by a litre of petrol. When mixed with petrol, it improves combustion performance and lowers the emissions of carbon monoxide and sulphur oxide.

B. Biodiesel

It is derived from vegetable oils like soybean oil or palm oil, vegetable waste oils and animal fats by a biochemical process called "Transesterification." It produces very little or no harmful gases as compared to diesel.

C. Biogas

It is produced by the anaerobic decomposition of organic matter like sewage from animals and humans. Major proportions of biogas are methane and carbon dioxide, though it also has small proportions of hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen, carbon monoxide and siloxanes.

D. Biobutanol

It is produced in the same way as bioethanol, i.e.

through the fermentation of starch. The energy content in butanol is the highest among the other gasoline alternatives. It can be added to diesel to reduce emissions.

E. Biohydrogen

Biohydrogen, like biogas, can be produced using a number of processes, such as pyrolysis, gasification or biological fermentation.

Different categories

A. First-Generation Biofuels

These are made from food sources such as sugar, starch, vegetable oil or animal fats using conventional technology. Common first-generation biofuels include bioalcohols, biodiesel, vegetable oil, bioethers and biogas.

Though the process of conversion is easy, the use of food sources in the production of biofuels creates an imbalance in the food economy, leading to increased food prices and hunger.

B. Second-Generation Biofuels

These are produced from non-food crops or portions of food crops that are not edible and considered wastes, e.g. stems, husks, wood chips, and fruit skins and peeling.

Thermochemical reactions or biochemical conversion processes are used for producing such fuels.

Though these fuels do not affect food economy, their production is quite complicated.

Also, it is reported that these biofuels emit less greenhouse gases when compared to first-generation biofuels.

C. Third-Generation Biofuels

These are produced from micro-organisms like algae. Micro-organisms can be grown using land and water unsuitable for food production, therefore reducing the strain on already depleted water sources.

D. Fourth-Generation Biofuels

In the production of these fuels, crops that are genetically engineered to take in high amounts of carbon are grown and harvested as biomass. The crops are then converted into fuel using second-generation techniques. The fuel is pre-combusted, and the carbon is captured. Then the carbon is geo-sequestered, meaning that the carbon is stored in depleted oil or gas fields or in unmineable coal seams.

Some of these fuels are considered carbon negative as their production pulls out carbon from the environ-

ment.

Advantages

Biofuels offer several advantages that make them an attractive alternative to fossil fuels. Here are some of the key benefits:

1. Environmental Benefits

Biofuels generally produce fewer greenhouse gases compared to fossil fuels. For instance, the combustion of biofuels typically releases lower levels of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and particulate matter, contributing to reduced air pollution and mitigating climate change.

2. Renewable Resource

Unlike fossil fuels, which are finite and depleting, biofuels can be replenished through natural processes and sustainable agricultural practices.

3. Energy Security

By diversifying the energy supply and reducing dependence on imported oil, biofuels can enhance national energy security.

Countries can produce biofuels domestically, decreasing their vulnerability to geopolitical tensions and fluctuations in global oil prices.

4. Economic Growth

The biofuel industry can stimulate economic growth by creating jobs in agriculture, manufacturing and distribution.

It supports rural economies by providing new markets for crops and agricultural residues, thereby benefiting farmers and local communities.

5. Reduction of Waste

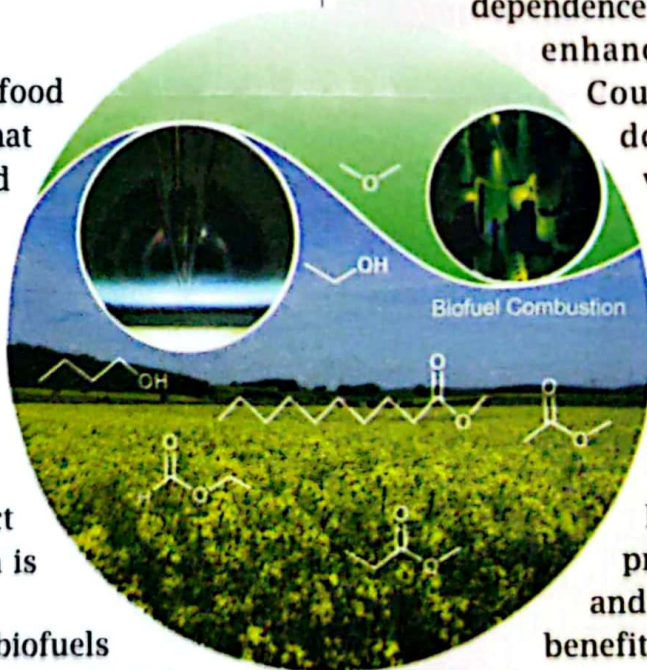
Biofuels can be produced from various types of waste materials, including agricultural residues, food waste and even certain types of industrial waste. This not only provides a source of energy but also helps in managing waste and reducing landfill usage.

6. Compatibility with Existing Infrastructure

Many biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel, can be used in existing engines and fuel distribution systems with little or no modification. This compatibility makes the transition from fossil fuels to biofuels relatively straightforward and cost-effective.

7. Biodegradability and Safety

Biofuels are typically biodegradable and less toxic than fossil fuels. In the event of a spill, biofuels cause less environmental damage compared to petroleum-based fuels, posing a lower risk to ecosystems and human



health.

8. Potential for Carbon Neutrality

Biofuels have the potential to be carbon neutral throughout their life cycle. The carbon dioxide absorbed by plants during their growth can offset the emissions produced when the biofuels are burned, leading to a closed carbon cycle.

9. Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Practices

The production of biofuels can encourage sustainable agricultural practices, such as crop rotation and the use of cover crops. These practices can improve soil health, enhance biodiversity and reduce the environmental impact of farming.

10. Innovation and Technological Development

The biofuel industry drives innovation and technological development in areas such as biotechnology, agricultural science and chemical engineering. Advances in these fields can lead to more efficient and sustainable biofuel production processes.

Disadvantages

1. Efficiency

Fossil fuels produce more energy than some of the biofuels. For instance, one gallon of ethanol produces less energy as compared to one gallon of gasoline (a fossil fuel).

2. Cost

Pumping fossil fuels from the ground is a difficult and expensive process, leading to high costs. Production of biofuels requires land, this impacts cost of biofuels as well as that of food crops.

Also, though growing engineered biofuel crops can benefit farmers commercially, the excess number of such crops can also lead to the loss of biodiversity.

3. Food Shortages

There is concern that using valuable cropland to grow fuel crops could have an impact on the cost of food and could possibly lead to food shortages.

4. Water Use

Massive quantities of water are required for proper irrigation of biofuel crops as well as to manufacture the fuel, which could strain local and regional water resources.

How countries are faring

Biofuel has already captured the attention of policymakers in many countries as a viable solution to improve energy security, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change and decrease

import bills. Across the globe, several countries, including the US, France, Germany, Spain, Canada, Argentina, China, Brazil and India, collectively produce over 300 million litres of ethanol per day, with production increasing every year.

In recent years, India has strategically focused on ethanol production for blending with petrol. The country is committed to enhancing its current blending ratio from 10% to 20% by 2030, aiming to decrease energy costs, fulfil climate pledges and tackle surplus production of sugarcane, maize, broken rice and other food grains. To achieve this goal, India is setting up modern ethanol plants across the country to convert crops and biomass/waste into ethanol.

The case of Pakistan

Considering the current conditions, the primary forms of biofuel production in Pakistan include ethanol, biodiesel and biogas. Of them, ethanol holds a prominent position due to its substantial production capacity in the country. Ethanol is sourced from energy crops, with maize (corn), sugarcane, rice, barley and sweet sorghum being the primary feedstocks alongside various other biomass materials like straw, grass and wood. For a country like Pakistan, substantial fluctuations in global oil prices pose a significant economic risk, disrupting the entire landscape

of the country's business, agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Consequently, making a concerted effort to minimize reliance on imported fuels should be a paramount national objective. Diversifying the energy mix had become the primary necessity of Pakistan so as to absorb the negative effects of fluctuating global oil prices. In this context, biofuels stand out as the preferable option.

Conclusion

For a country like Pakistan, high volatility in global oil prices represents a major risk for the economy that alters the entire dynamics of the country's business, agriculture and manufacturing. Thus, reducing dependency on imported fuel to the maximum extent possible should be a national priority. To this end, indigenous energy crops like maize and sugarcane can offer a very promising opportunity, if their production and recovery rates are increased. ■

The writer is a student of Environmental Science.



On June 25, the US House of Representatives passed with an overwhelming majority of around 85% a resolution whereby "full and independent investigation of claims of interference or irregularities" in elections held early in February 2024 in Pakistan was demanded. The resolution 901, which was passed by a massive 368 against 7 votes, also condemned "attempts to suppress the people of Pakistan's participation in their democracy, including through harassment, intimidation, violence, arbitrary detention, restrictions on access to the internet and telecommunications or any violation of their human, civil or political rights."

What did the resolution say?

Under the resolution, the House affirmed its strong support for democracy in Pakistan, including free and fair elections reflecting the will of the people of Pakistan. It called on the President and Secretary of State to strengthen engagement with the government of Pakistan to ensure democracy, human rights and rule of law in the country. The resolution also urged the government of Pakistan "to uphold democratic and electoral institutions, human rights and the rule of law, and respect the fundamental guarantees of due process, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech of the people of Pakistan."

The Resolution also condemned attempts to suppress the people of Pakistan's participation in their democracy by any means. It urged the full and independent investigation of claims of interference or irregularities in Pakistan's February 2024 election.

The passing of the said resolution in the US House of

Representatives received significant coverage in the international media and sparked a new debate at the global diplomatic level. Some observers saw it as a positive sign for strengthening democratic values and protection of human rights, while most analysts criticized it as interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.

Pakistan's reaction

A day after the passage of Resolution 901, Pakistan's Foreign Office termed it an unsolicited interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs. "We believe that bilateral relations between countries should be based on mutual respect and sovereign equality. The unsolicited interference from the US Congress is therefore neither welcome nor acceptable," the FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch remarked.

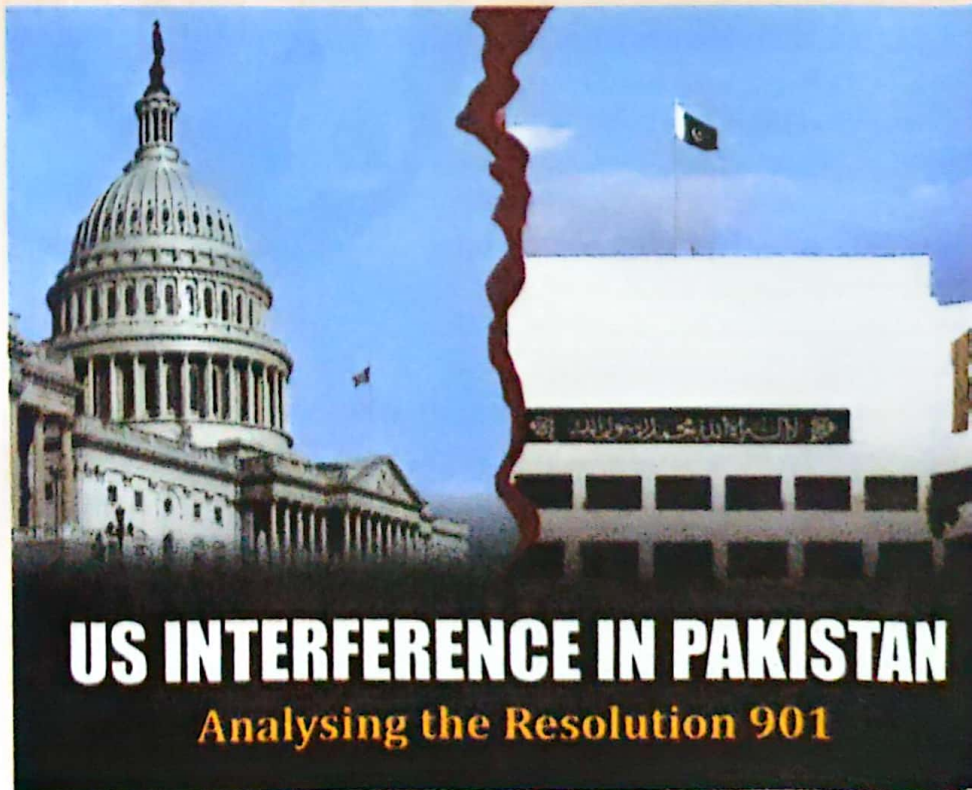
Besides, the spokesperson added, the timing and context of the said resolution were also not conducive to the current positive trajectory of bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United States.

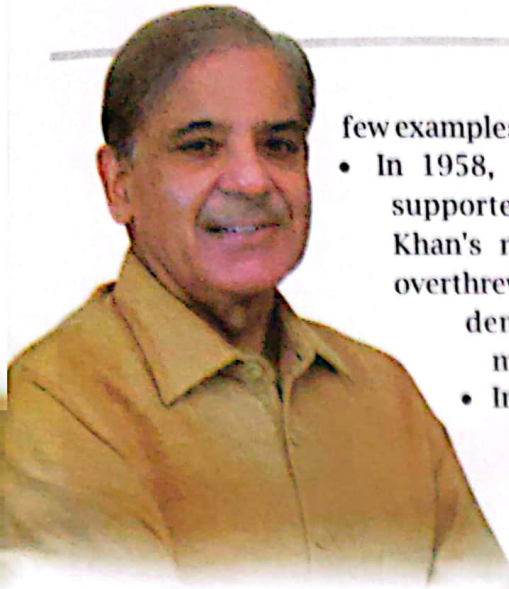
Later, two days after the passing of the Resolution, Pakistan's National Assembly passed a resolution with a majority vote, terming it "an interference" in Pakistan's internal affairs. The NA resolution stated that Pakistan "will not accept any interference in its internal affairs, and the subject resolution is an attempt to undermine the state."

Instances of US interference in Pakistan

The United States has a notorious history of interfering in other countries, often dismantling democratic governments to replace them with military regimes. It has also a long history of direct involvement and interference in Pakistan's domestic issues, of which

Recently, the United States House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly in favour of an impartial investigation into claims of election manipulation in Pakistan following the February 8, 2024, national polls. The Resolution condemns "attempts to suppress the people of Pakistan's participation in their democracy, including through harassment, intimidation, violence, arbitrary detention, restrictions on access to the Internet and telecommunications, or any violation of their human, civil or political rights." Pakistan strongly denounced Resolution 901, calling it "unsolicited interference" in Pakistan's domestic affairs, which was "neither welcome nor acceptable".





few examples are at hand:

- In 1958, the United States supported General Ayub Khan's military coup that overthrew Pakistan's first democratic government.
- In the 1970s, the United States provided military aid and diplomatic support to

the government of Pakistan during Bangladesh's 'war of independence'. Among other factors, this process also indirectly contributed to the breakup of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh.

- In the 1980s, when Russia invaded Afghanistan, the United States, using Pakistan as a proxy, provided financial support to Mujahideen groups in Afghanistan and provided them with combat training as well as armed them.
- In 2011, in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad, a secret operation was carried out by the American intelligence agencies without prior permission from the Pakistani government, as a result of which Osama bin Laden was eliminated.
- In 2011, under American pressure, the American agent Raymond Davis, who was involved in the murder of two Pakistanis, was safely transferred from a Pakistani prison to the United States.

Apart from this practical intervention, Pakistan's internal affairs have also been discussed in the past in the American Congress and on various occasions, resolutions presented by the Congress members on the internal affairs of Pakistan were passed.

- In 2009, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on Pakistan to take action against the Taliban and other terrorist groups operating within its borders.
- In 2017, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning the persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan. The resolution also called for the repeal of Pakistan's blasphemy laws and the release of prisoners imprisoned under these laws.
- In 2019, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning the suppression of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in Pakistan. The resolution also demanded the

release of PTM leaders and an end to human rights violations.

Implications of the resolution

Through this resolution, the US House of Representatives has tried to undermine the state of Pakistan, its sovereignty, independence and integrity. Indeed, Pakistan does not require lecturing by any state about its internal affairs, which essentially is a violation of the concept of the nation-state system and UN Charter. Nonetheless, the resolution is a wake-up call for all stakeholders in Pakistan; the state, political parties, the people of Pakistan and the institutions of national security. This resolution has been passed at a time when Pak-US relations were heading towards a new normalcy. In the past few months, there have been some predictions and indicators that proclaimed an improvement in this bilateral relationship. The resolution is in fact a negation of such prophecies since US Congress has a major role towards foreign policy of the US and its international relations. The resolution seems to be aimed at putting pressure on Pakistan to accept US demands, which run against the national interests of Pakistan.

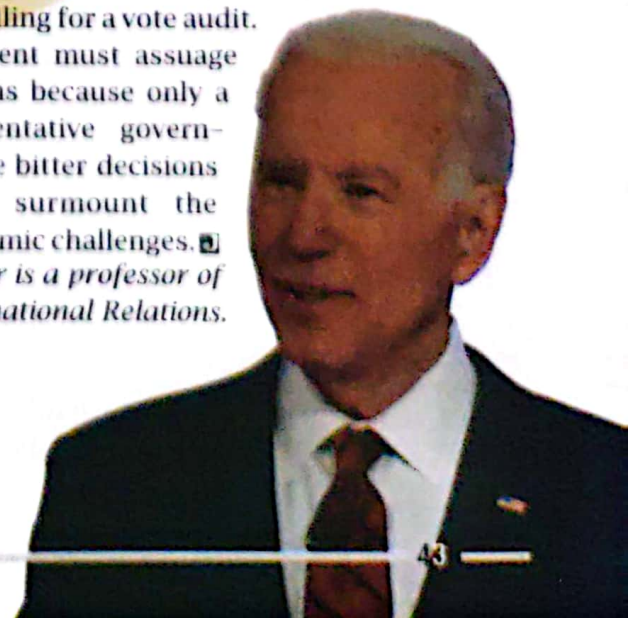
Conclusion

While the Congressional "meddling in Pakistan's internal affairs" may have shocked the government, the concerns it has raised about the election are not alien. Almost all opposition parties have alleged that the election was massively rigged. The poll monitor FAFEN has called for an independent audit and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has raised serious issues on the integrity and credibility of the process. The US, UK and EU have also raised doubts on the credibility of the elections.

While the National Assembly's resolution makes for good optics, dismissing widespread concerns on the election's credibility would only hurt Pakistan's democratic credentials globally, weaken public trust in democracy and democratic values locally and further antagonise the embittered opposition calling for a vote audit.

The government must assuage these concerns because only a truly representative government can take bitter decisions required to surmount the current economic challenges. ■

The writer is a professor of International Relations.



PAKISTAN-IRAN



RELATIONS

Charting the way forward

Mariam Ghaffar

Foreign policy plays an important role in shaping international relations and fostering cooperation to combat mutual challenges. For any country, having a strong foreign policy that protects its sovereignty and national interest is a key priority. Pakistan stands at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. This key strategic position has made it a significant player in regional and global politics. Pakistan's foreign policy is influenced directly by geographical factors, historical experiences, economic ties and security concerns. Being the first country to recognize Pakistan, Iran has almost always maintained friendly relations with the country. This relationship is multifaceted, shaped by religious affinities and cultural and economic ties. This bilateral relationship also exists within a broader geopolitical context that is heavily influenced by the interests of the United States. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent US-led war for around 20 years have drastically changed the regional dynamics and made the US a key player in the region. In order to understand the complexities of Pakistan-Iran relations, it is imperative to thoroughly examine the US opposition to these growing ties.

Historical context and strategic interests

Pakistan and Iran share a long, and often cooperative, history. In the early years, following Pakistan's independence in 1947, Iran was the first country to establish ties with the nascent state. During the Cold

War, both countries were part of the US-led Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) that reflected a shared strategic alignment against the Soviet influence. However, the 1979 Revolution marked a significant shift in Iran's foreign policy and challenged the status quo. This shift led Iran to maintain a more independent and anti-Western stance, leading to the US-imposed sanctions and freezing of Iranian assets. This change shook the world and effected a radical change in global alliances. Despite this, Pakistan balanced its relations with Iran despite growing US hostility and opposition.

Economic cooperation and energy projects

Economic cooperation, particularly in the energy sector, has been a cornerstone of Pakistan-Iran relations. The Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project, initially conceived as the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline, is a great example in this context. The pipeline aims to transport natural gas from Iran's South Pars field to Pakistan, potentially alleviating Pakistan's chronic energy shortages. However, the project has faced significant hurdles, primarily due to American opposition. The US has consistently opposed the pipeline, citing concerns over Iran's nuclear program and its broader regional behaviour. American sanctions on Iran have also complicated the financial and logistical aspects of the project, leading to delays and uncertainties. Despite being inaugurated in 2013, the project has not been completed yet.

Security dynamics

The security dimension of Pakistan-Iran relations is

complex. Both

countries have

impose sanctions on Iran in 1979, when some

students had taken hostage the US embassy in Tehran. Iran's nuclear program, which started in the 1950s with US support, was now being pursued by Iran secretly. The continuation of the program has been a major concern for the US, as it believes that Iranian possession of nuclear weapons is

faced internal and cross-border militant threats. In Pakistan, sectarian violence often spills over into its relations with Iran, given the presence of a significant Shia minority in Pakistan and the Sunni-Shia divide in the broader region. Additionally, regional dynamics involving Afghanistan and the influence of external powers further complicate the landscape. The US presence in Afghanistan, and later its withdrawal leading to Taliban's government, has significant implications for both Pakistan and Iran. The two countries seek stability in Afghanistan, but their approaches and alliances differ, and it adds another layer of complexity to their relationship. Recently, at the start of the year 2024, the two countries engaged in multiple strikes, without prior notice, across borders, intending to target militants. This setback in relations was then immediately countered and diplomatic ties were re-established. Subsequently, in April 2024, the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi visited Pakistan, where he was warmly welcomed. The agenda of the visit was to promote economic ties and enhance cooperation in various sectors, e.g. trade, connectivity, agriculture and energy.

The US factor

The US policy has played a crucial role in shaping Pakistan-Iran relations. Washington's strategic alliance with Israel, its adversarial stance towards Iran and its complex relationship with Pakistan create a challenging environment for Pakistan-Iran cooperation. In the decades before the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the country served as a major ally of the US. The last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, maintained a strong pro-US policy and received significant American support in return. However, the Revolution changed the dynamics and the country shifted towards an anti-American stance. This led the US to

highly dangerous. Currently, Iran's alleged support for the Yemen's Houthis, who have caused drastic damages to global trade in the wake of an ongoing genocide in Gaza, and Iranian attack on Israel have also brought the country in a challenging position vis-à-vis the US. This escalation of hostilities between the US and Iran disrupted the regional dynamics and made the former a significant player in the military policy of the region. This historical context helps us understand the US opposition to Pakistan-Iran ties.

Pakistan and Iran amid US opposition

The two countries, despite their share of mutual concerns, have maintained brotherly and friendly ties. Pakistan's approach to managing its relationship with Iran amid US opposition involves a delicate balancing act. Islamabad seeks to maintain constructive relations with Tehran to secure its energy needs and regional stability while also preserving its strategic ties with the US. The growing hostility and the Gaza situation have significantly changed the global landscape. Amid the changing dynamics, Pakistan-Iran relations move towards economic cooperation and strengthening ties despite US opposition. While Pakistan relies heavily on the US for economic benefits and military support, it needs Iran too for its greater economic interests. The US has recently warned Pakistan of the consequences of being involved in any trade with Iran. However, sharing a border with Iran, Pakistan has chosen to strengthen its ties as the potential of this relationship still remains largely untapped. The visit of the late Iranian president was symbolic of Pakistan's independent foreign policy. Historically, Pakistan's policy to maintain ties with Iran came at the expense of strained Pakistan-US relations with reductions in aid and increased pressure. With the ever-changing dynamics of global power struggle, it is

interesting to observe the rise of China and the evolving role of Russia in the region, as it will significantly create a more anti-Western stance in the region, creating more obstacles for America to hold its sway here. Pakistan-Iran relations are shaped by a complex interplay of historical ties, economic interests and regional security concerns, shadowed by the presence of US policy. Pakistan needs to maintain a delicate balance between Iran and the US so as to ensure its sovereignty and national interests.

Presidential election in Iran

The sudden demise of Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has significantly changed the political dynamics of the region. This unexpected turn of events has important implications not only for Iran but also for neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan.

The administration of Raisi, a hardline cleric and a former judiciary chief, was marked by a religiously conservative approach. Raisi's tenure focused on resisting Western pressure, advancing Iran's nuclear program and reinforcing the country's regional influence. His death left a vacuum at a critical juncture, prompting swift electoral action to fill the leadership void. This void has been filled by Masoud Pezeshkian, the new president-elect who won the race by a narrow margin. This was a surprise defeat of the hardline clerics in Iran.

Implications for Pakistan

1. Economic opportunities

A stable and economically rejuvenated Iran offers significant economic opportunities for Pakistan. If Pezeshkian, with his reformist ideology, can help the country with the lifting of sanctions and reintegration into the global economy, he potentially could open new avenues for trade. Pakistan, which shares a long border with Iran, could benefit from enhanced trade in

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The normalisation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, brokered by China, can usher in an era of significant geopolitical dividends for the region as well as states like Pakistan

“

sectors such as energy, agriculture and manufacturing.

2. Regional stability

Stability in Iran is crucial for regional security, especially for Pakistan. The two countries share a border in the Balochistan region, which has been a hotspot for smuggling and insurgent activities. An Iranian government that focuses on maintaining brotherly ties could

lead to better border management and cooperation on security issues, reducing cross-border tensions and enhancing regional stability.

The shift in Iran's leadership and its subsequent foreign policy adjustments will influence the broader geopolitical landscape. Pakistan maintains a delicate balance in its relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia and

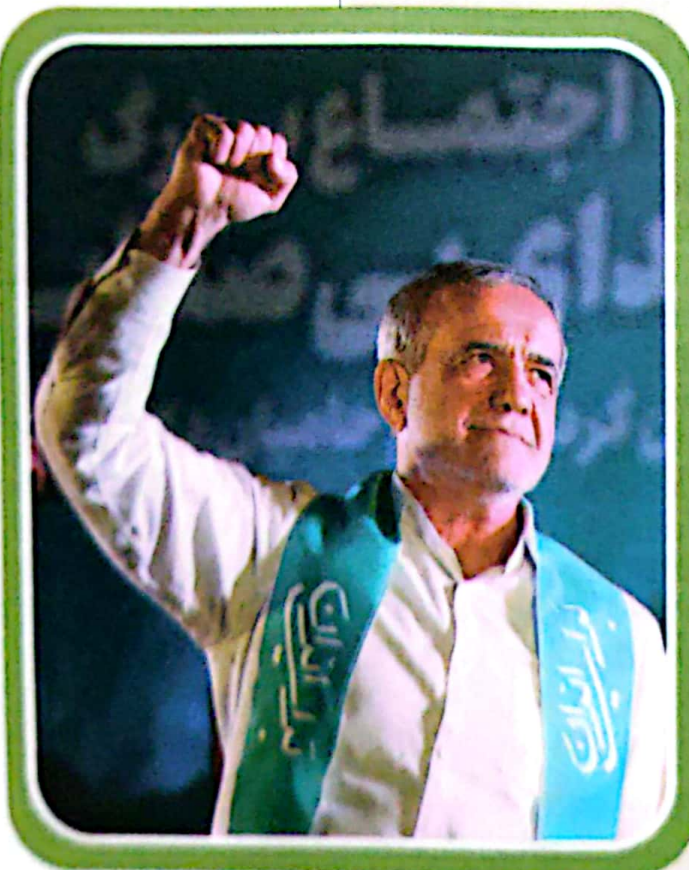
other Gulf states. As mentioned in his manifesto Masoud Pezeshkian will maintain a more moderate foreign policy. This might help the Iranian government in easing sectarian tensions in the region, allowing Pakistan to pursue a more balanced foreign policy as well. Additionally, improved Iran-US relations could create a more stable regional environment, benefitting Pakistan's strategic interests.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the evolving political landscape in post-Raisi Iran presents both opportunities and challenges for Pakistan.

A stable and economically strong Iran could serve as a valuable partner in the region, fostering trade, enhancing security and contributing to a more stable geopolitical environment. As such, Pakistan must closely monitor these developments and proactively engage with Iran's new leadership to maximize the potential benefits while mitigating any adverse impacts. ■

The writer is a graduate from LUMS



What is Learning Poverty?




3 out of 4 Pakistani children under **10** are unable to read and understand an age-appropriate paragraph — a phenomenon that has been termed **Learning Poverty**.



Girls face greater challenges in their access to, and retention in, schools.

Many more girls (12 million) than boys (8 million) are not in school.

Key challenges that affect enrolment, attendance, retention, and learning include:

-  Long distances to school, especially at post-primary levels
-  Overcrowded classrooms even when schools are accessible
-  Lack of adequate, functional toilets



School closures during the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 floods have deepened the learning crisis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools nationwide were closed for 18 months, leading to significant dropouts and loss.

In 2022, 17,000 schools were damaged by the floods, impacting over 2.6 million children who were out of school for seven weeks on average.

! Many children who dropped out as a result of these closures have yet to return to school, and may never do so.



WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO END LEARNING POVERTY?



Expand access to schooling, especially for girls.



Establish a mandatory daily literacy or reading lesson in all public schools, nationwide.



Recognize the reality of multigrade teaching and provide support to teachers.



Amplify the education budget and maximize spending efficiency.



Publish quality education data to drive improvements in governance and outcomes.



Ensure that teachers are well trained and **quality teachers** are equitably assigned to schools.

To learn more, read the World Bank Pakistan Discussion Note, Improving Learning Outcomes, 2023

ENERGY,

Trade and Investment

Building Bridges between Pakistan and Central Asia

Dr. Muhammad Anwar Farooq

Central Asian states refer to the five countries located in the central region of the Asian continent. These countries are Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. They share historical, cultural and economic ties with each other and with their neighbours, including Pakistan. Collectively, these countries have a population of approximately 77 million, with Kazakhstan housing about 19 million, Uzbekistan around 35 million, Turkmenistan six million, Kyrgyzstan seven million and Tajikistan 10 million.

The Central Asian region is rich in natural resources, particularly hydrocarbons, with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan boasting substantial oil and natural gas reserves. Pakistan can benefit from these resources to meet its energy needs. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project exemplifies this potential, aiming to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. Additionally, the hydropower potential in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan presents another avenue for electricity imports. These resources can significantly contribute to Pakistan's energy sector, reducing its reliance on traditional energy imports and enhancing energy security.

Trade and commerce can also be greatly enhanced through partnerships with Central Asian countries. These nations provide new markets for Pakistani products such as textiles, pharmaceuticals and agricultural goods, while also serving as sources for minerals, machinery and other imports. Improving infra-

structure and connectivity is crucial for facilitating these trade relationships. Projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) aim to extend links to Central Asia, facilitating direct trade routes. Gwadar Port, a key component of CPEC, can function as a logistics hub for Central Asian exports, giving these landlocked nations access to the Arabian Sea and broader international markets.

Investment opportunities abound, with potential for joint ventures in sectors like agriculture, textiles, mining and energy. The establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along trade routes can attract investments from Central Asian states, fostering economic collaboration. Pakistan's strategic location and participation in regional organizations like the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) further strengthen its position as a trade gateway.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan's trade volume with Central Asian states, although growing, remains relatively modest compared to its trade with other regions. In 2022, trade with Azerbaijan amounted to \$28 million. For the fiscal year 2023, trade with Tajikistan stood at \$36.46 million, with Pakistan exporting \$12.09 million and importing \$24.38 million worth of goods. Kazakhstan saw a significant trade volume of \$139.33 million in 2022-23, heavily favouring

Pakistan with \$132.73 million in exports against \$5.58 million in imports.

Trade with the Kyrgyz Republic in the fiscal year 2022-23 was \$11.05 million, with Pakistan exporting goods worth \$10.99 million and importing to the tune of \$0.069 million. Turkmenistan had a total trade volume of \$8.41 million,



with Pakistan exporting \$2.234 million and importing \$6.17 million. Trade with Uzbekistan for the year 2021 amounted to \$126.05 million, with \$88.18 million in exports from Pakistan and \$37.87 million in imports. The total trade volume between Pakistan and the Central Asian countries is estimated to be around \$400–500 million annually. This figure includes both imports and exports and reflects the untapped potential for increasing trade in this region. Pakistan primarily exports textiles, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, rice and sports goods to these markets, while importing minerals, oil and gas, chemicals and machinery from them. The energy sector, particularly natural gas from Turkmenistan, plays a crucial role in this trade dynamic.

Despite the promising prospects, several challenges hinder the full potential of trade between Pakistan and Central Asia. Geopolitical instability in Afghanistan, limited direct transport links and bureaucratic hurdles are significant barriers. The ongoing instability in Afghanistan disrupts the crucial transit route for goods. Even within Central Asia, under-developed infrastructure and logistical limitations can create bottlenecks. Pakistan also faces competition from other regional powers like China and India, which offer alternative trade routes and partnerships. Beyond physical barriers, non-tariff issues like complex customs procedures, currency exchange problems and a lack of standardized trade regulations can act as invisible walls. Also, political and economic uncertainties within Central Asian countries themselves can make for an unpredictable trading environment. Pakistan must aim to become a vital trade link between Central Asia and the global market. They are heavily invested in infrastructure projects, particularly those connecting them to Central Asia, like roads, railways and pipelines. This includes their participation in the CPEC, which creates a direct route to warm water ports on the Arabian Sea. To smoothen trade flows, Pakistan



is pursuing free trade agreements with Central Asian countries and is working to improve trade finance, customs procedures and overall regional connectivity. Recognizing the importance of a stable Afghanistan as a transit route, Pakistan is also collaborating for improved cooperation on this front. Participation in regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can further enhance trade relations by creating a more conducive environment for economic collaboration.

The stabilization of Afghanistan and the completion of infrastructure projects like CPEC are expected to significantly boost trade volume between Pakistan and Central Asia. With these developments, Pakistan's

trade volume with Central Asian states is expected to rise significantly, poten-

tially reaching billions of dollars annually. The energy sector,

particularly natural gas from

Turkmenistan, will

continue to play a crucial

role in this trade

dynamic. Pakistan's

commitment to

becoming a key trade

partner for Central

Asia, along with its

strategic initiatives

and investments,

positions it as a

potential major trade

hub in the region.

The relationship between

Pakistan and the Central

Asian states holds immense

potential for economic growth

and development. By addressing the

challenges and leveraging the opportuni-

ties, Pakistan can significantly enhance its trade

and economic ties with these nations. Continued

investment in infrastructure, strong regional cooper-

ation and a focus on fostering stability in Afghanistan

will be essential for realizing this potential. As

Pakistan strengthens its position as a trade gateway to

Central Asia, the economic benefits are likely to

extend beyond the region, contributing to broader

global economic integration and prosperity. ■

The writer is the Director, Institute of Humanities and Arts, at Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan.

Pakistan's Political

Quagmire

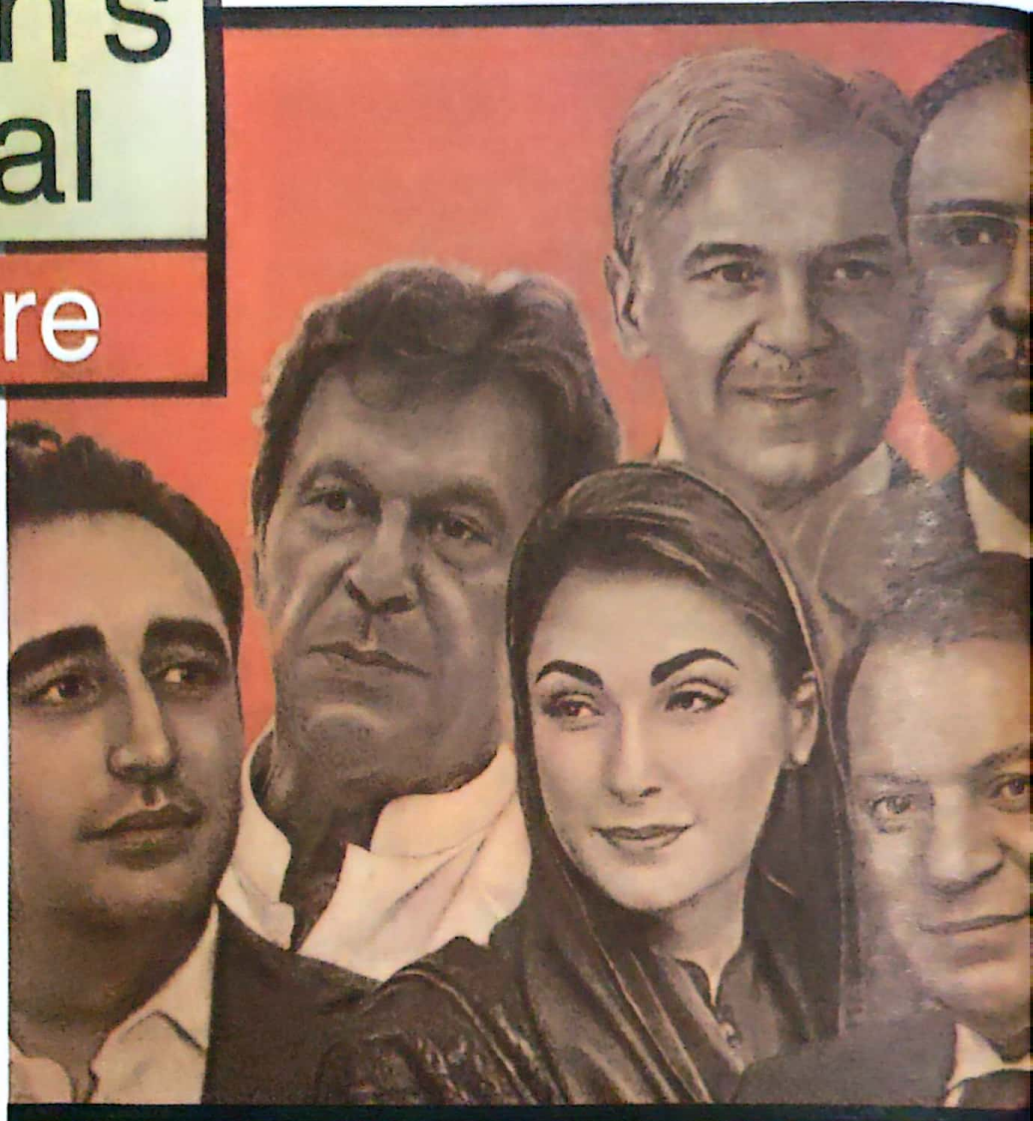
A legacy of entrenched elites

Hannan Baloch

The chronically unstable, oligarchic political order in Pakistan has always impeded the evolution of modern governance. Patronage-based politics practiced by pseudo-democratic and military dictatorships alike worked on establishing networks of influential businessmen and political families, clans and kinships just to maintain themselves in power. But this mode of governance failed to cater for the needs of an increasingly complex society. From 22 families, which were part of policymaking in Ayub Khan's era, to still having a bunch of households controlling 70% of the country's financial assets, Pakistan has not changed much.

Since the very inception of Pakistan, political parties have revolved around personalities. They do not resemble modern organizations but are built around traditional kinship groups - Nawabs, Sardars and other local influentials - to effectively become family fiefdoms. Even today, the dynastic character of our political parties illustrates the primacy of personalism over organization.

Pakistan Peoples Party is led by Benazir Bhutto's son and co-chaired by her widower. The PML-N is controlled by the Sharif brothers, with their progeny being prepared for future leadership roles. Similar is the case with the Awami National Party. Even religious parties have not been immune to this malaise. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who inherited the party from his father, Mufti Mehmod, is ready for the transfer of leadership role to his son, Asad Mahmood. These



dynasties have constrained wider public participation as they are the antithesis of modern inclusionary politics, impeding democracy within their parties. The leaders of most major political or politico-religious parties are not elected; rather, they assume their positions by acclamation. Nor do any elections determine who will hold party reins at different tiers. They are usually selected by leaders based on their loyalty, closeness or financial support for the party. The political system in Pakistan has evolved around feudalism, baradari and kinships, tribal affiliations and ethnic groupings because they bolster the elitist and patronage-based state. Nepotism, favouritism and corruption have become entrenched social norms. Trust and social capital, which play a positive role, are, on the other hand, rapidly eroding. Social polarization of 'us' versus 'them' has become part of our norms, reinforcing tendencies of adversity, confrontation and hostility.

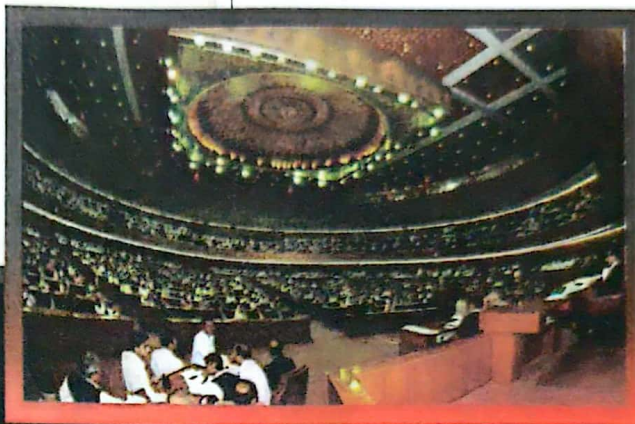
These new societal normals have become ingrained in the voters' psyche as well. At a lower level, as most of them do not have direct access to government services, they deploy their elected representatives as their intermediaries to interact with the government departments for the resolution of their problems.

They expect these MNAs, MPAs and local party leaders to provide maximum benefits to them and their kith and kin in matters like jobs, livelihoods, admission to schools, healthcare, land, water and, most importantly, police stations over land disputes. They hardly care whether the applicants are eligible for jobs or not; whether their demand is legitimate or illegal. Constituency politics forces candidates to go out of the way to oblige their voters. This pressure, rather than prudence, results in unqualified and incompetent people entering the public service and public enterprises. The election manifestos of political parties become subservient to constituency politics. The consequences of such behaviour on the part of the electorate are disastrous for the economy and society in equal proportions. The public sector expands in numbers with unproductive people on payroll and budgetary ceilings are often breached. The

can be attracted to take part in politics is the sole solution to steer Pakistan through its predicaments. Unlike other countries where one usually becomes rich by the dint of one's hard work, risk-taking and enterprise, all you need to become a millionaire in Pakistan overnight is a privileged status that enables you to acquire plots of land for you and your family, development funds, contracts and public procurement as largesse from the government of the day.

An empowered and fully resourced local government (LG) system would open doors to newcomers gradually, nibbling at the exclusivity of the electives, as many of the Nazims first elected in LG Elections in

2001 later thrashed dynasties in their respective districts. This was credited to the 'devolution of power' plan introduced by General Pervez Musharraf in January 2000. Though this was intended to legitimize his military



public at large suffers at the hands of these functionaries in the form of low quality delivery of goods and services. Absentee teachers and health workers, corrupt revenue officials and police make lives miserable for the common citizen. Anatol Lieven aptly summarizes this phenomenon in his book, *Pakistan: A Hard Country*. He asserts:

"Insofar as the political system runs on patronage and kinship and corruption is intertwined with patronage and kinship, it would mean gutting Pakistan's society like a fish. Kinship plays a vital part in maintaining the dominance of the feudal elites and many of the urban bosses."

Establishing a political and electoral system that moves away from dynastic and elite capture to a broad-based, inclusive system, where educated middle-class individuals of calibre and competence



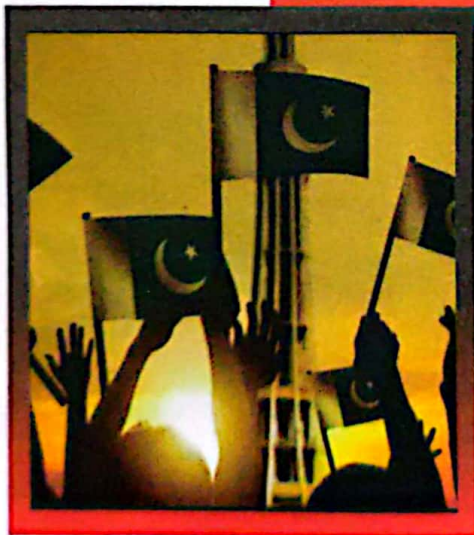
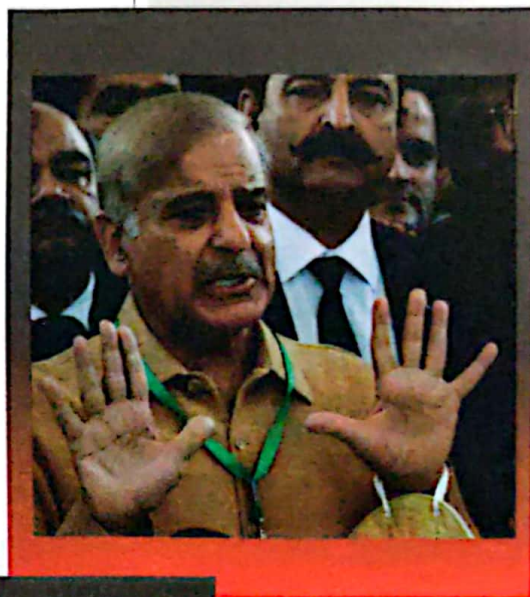
rule, and not effect a politico-ideological shift, it was seen as a move to empower the masses as the power was decentralized from the federal and provincial governments to the grassroots level. A similar devolution plan should be followed now. First, in addition to devolving administrative and expenditure responsibilities to LGs, decentralization should involve changes in the administrative level of decision-making, the accountability of district decision-making authority, and the nature of fiscal resources available. A directly elected government at the district level with District Nazim/Mayor/District Chairman as

head of the district administration, with DC and DPO directly reporting to him, would result in efficiency, accountability, resource mobilization and better resource utilization. Local communities know their problems and their solutions much better than externally appointed officers. The present culture of concentrating authority in the hands of a few 'babus' has not only alienated the rural periphery, but has also reduced its productive potential, to no small extent. This would be a significant departure from the previous system where the de-facto head of district administration, the Deputy Commissioner (DC), reported to the unelected provincial secretariat, where, as we all know, bossy culture prevailed with no pain for the sufferings of people. Contrarily, in the new system, the head of the district administration would be accountable to the masses, as he or she would have to return to the public to seek a mandate. These reforms would be an effort to curb the bureaucratic power of DC, including the executive magistracy and revenue collection. The abuse of discretionary powers, bureaucratic obstruction and delaying tactics adopted by government functionaries would end. While local governments did exist before, they did not have any specific role as they, especially in rural areas, were practically inactive, and most importantly, most of the state functions were carried out by provincial bureaucracy. These public services should be transferred to the district head. When tackling governance problems, it must be realized that meaningful empowerment of communities through decentralization and delegation of authority, in which the local government system plays a crucial role, would promote, in the long run, greater trust, cohesion and harmony in our society and ensure access to basic public services efficiently and equitably. These outcomes will not only help mobilize additional resources at the local level but will also improve the efficiency of resource utilization. The present state of disaffection and discontentment with the government

would also be mitigated if public good and services everyday use to the citizens became available to them at the grassroots level.

Unfortunately, the position of political leadership regarding empowering and strengthening local governments is highly unfavourable, as, in fact, it entails the transfer of power from the provincial and national legislators and the ministers to the locally elected nazims or mayors of the districts. Naturally, the resistance to empowerment and resource transfer to the local governments comes from these legislators who would lose their power of patronage under such

system, and from the bureaucracy, because it will mark an end to their 'babu culture'. Thus, deliberate efforts are made to dilute the law establishing these local bodies. Legislators curbing the powers of local governments in the Punjab Local Government Amendment Act 2003 and bureaucracy hindering founder PTI Imran Khan's endeavour to reform the political landscape of Punjab are



striking precedents. Despite the Supreme Court's clear instructions, there has been very little movement in setting up these entities. The 18th Amendment and the NFC Award are positive steps, delegating authority and resources to the provinces. However, it is of vital importance to note that development is incomplete unless extended to districts by setting up a Provincial Finance Commission. If conspicuous efforts are not made to delegate relevant authority as well as resources directly to the districts, much of the benefits of the amendment and the award will fizzle out. None of this is possible without political will on the part of a political leadership that works for the greater good rather than just its own interests. Political will can only be asserted effectively when leaders enjoy authority as well as power, are not subservient to the establishment and pursue goals regarded as fair and legitimate by the public. Only such an assertion of political will can help revive the hope that accompanied Pakistan at its inception, because the Pakistani people deserve no less. ■

Notified Espionage?

Welcome to an Orwellian State

The Government of Pakistan has handed the country's premier intelligence and security agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), keys to a mass surveillance system set up at the telecom operator level in the country, empowering its officers to "intercept calls and messages" and to trace calls made through any telecommunication system. The language of the notification issued in this regard suggests that these new powers are absolute and unquestionable – a serious breach of citizens' right to privacy.

Privacy, which is guaranteed as a fundamental right under Article 14 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, is now highly vulnerable in the country. This Article emphatically guarantees citizens the right to dignity and privacy, which cannot be violated unless by law. Although the practice of tapping phones and intercepting calls and messages of those suspected of being engaged in criminal, terrorist or anti-state activities is certainly not new for Pakistan, the government has now given it legal cover through SRO 1005(I)/2024, which is based on statutory rules under the authority of Section 54 of the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-Organization) Act, 1996. But, tapping private conversation, and that too without any justified reason, is tantamount to a breach of fundamental rights. And, Pakistani courts have always upheld people's rights. Mere SROs, official directions, rules or orders of the President, Prime Minister, Ministers, or other members of the Executive cannot permit or validate

Abdul Samee Sohoo

the violation of constitutional provisions. For example, in Benazir Bhutto's case (PLD 1998 SC 388), a seven-member bench of the Supreme Court declared the tapping of telephones is unconstitutional, illegal and unlawful.

Despite the Supreme Court's clear judgment on this matter, under what authority did the present government promulgate the SRO citing national interest? Throughout Pakistan's history, many unconstitutional acts

have been carried out under the guise of national interest. In this country, anything that cannot be done directly is often done indirectly in the name of national interest or security. However, the guarantees bestowed in the Constitution must be upheld, even in times of crises such as war and civil unrest.

The legal framework in Pakistan is as fragile as a weak nose, where any powerful person can turn it according to his wishes, either to the left or to the right. However, it is troubling to observe that a declared fundamental right has been infringed upon through a mere SRO, symbolizing a paralyzed parliament and a puzzled government. Tapping private conversation and that too without any justified reason, is tantamount to a breach of fundamental rights. Enabling such an act under the premise of national security concerns, hints at the government's ineptness.

Furthermore, national interest or security decisions are left to be determined by a grade 18 officer. If eavesdropping or tapping of phones of federal executives, provincial executives or judges is deemed necessary for national security purposes, it is incomprehensible that an officer of the ISI, through the said SRO, holds more power than the constitutional office-holders.

Another aspect of the case, in terms of constitutional provisions, cannot be ignored: once any person's telephone is subjected to eavesdropping, tapping, intrusion or any form of interference, it violates the right to free speech and expression.

Lastly, through such tapping or eavesdropping in the name of national security, officials and stakeholders of the state will suffer greatly in the future because everyone can be easily blackmailed. The government has issued such a notification based on rules, but the question remains: who will prevail, the rules, the Supreme Court's decision, or constitutional rights? ■

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mines trust in government, stifles citizen participation and perpetuates a cycle of extractive governance.

Economic inequality and barriers to entry

Economic disparity afflicts Pakistan, with the small elite holding disproportionate wealth and resources. Feudal land-ownership patterns still exist in rural areas, where large land-owning families, who also wield enormous power over local politics, abuse their tenants. In metropolitan areas, oligopolistic ownership of important industries by business tycoons concentrates economic power in the hands of a few, suffocating competition and innovation.

Furthermore, marginalized communities face structural hurdles to economic involvement, limiting their upward mobility. Inadequate access to decent education, healthcare and financial services exacerbates inequality, perpetuating poverty and marginalization. The

informal sector, which accounts for a huge chunk of Pakistan's economy, illustrates millions of people's struggle to make both ends meet in the face of hazardous working conditions and limited social protection. In the words of Acemoglu and Robinson, "Inclusive economic institutions, such as those in the United States or Western Europe, are those that

allow and encourage participation by the great mass of people in economic activities that make best use of their talents and skills and that enable individuals to make the choices they wish." The current fiscal policies in Pakistan, with increased taxation on salaried class and increased government expenditure, hinder long-term economic growth by stifling disposable income and reducing incentive for economic participation among the middle class.

Historical legacies

Pakistan's growth trajectory is influenced by long-standing legacies such as colonialism, partition and subsequent state-building issues. The legacy of British colonial authority has left a strong imprint on Pakistan's institutional architecture, which is marked by extractive governance institutions and institutionalized inequalities. The partition of British India in 1947 resulted in widespread relocation, communal

violence and the tearing apart of the social fabric, leaving scars that may still be felt in the form of Pakistan's socioeconomic divisions. In addition to this, Pakistan's troubled relationship with India, which stems from the legacy of partition, has exacerbated regional tensions and enhanced military spending, diverting resources from essential social and economic investments. The ongoing violence in Kashmir exacerbates security concerns while undermining hopes for regional peace and stability. Furthermore, the legacy of Cold War geopolitics has rendered Pakistan vulnerable to external influences and proxy conflicts, hindering its growth path.

Conclusion

In order to foster inclusive institutions and restore confidence in government, transparency, accountability and participation of citizens are essential

ingredients. As Acemoglu and Robinson assert, "Economic success or failure is determined by the incentives created by institutions and political institutions are the key." By fostering inclusive institutions that empower all citizens and promote economic opportunities, Pakistan can overcome its challenges and unlock its potential for sustained prosperity and development. Moreover, in order

Extractive institutions concentrate power in the hands of a few and place constraints on the ability of the rest of the population to challenge this power.

to foster growth in a wide range of sectors, investment in human development, increasing access to education and health care and supporting entrepreneurship are inevitable. Moreover, to mitigate security risks and unlock the potential of the region's economy, it is important to promote regional cooperation and peace-building initiatives. In order to overcome the persistent obstacles and realize its full potential as a powerful, prosperous nation, Pakistan's journey towards sustainable development requires strong, visionary leadership, integration of governance under one roof and concerted efforts by all stakeholders. Pakistan can chart a path towards a brighter future for all its citizens through strategic reforms and sustained commitment to inclusive development, overcoming the constraints of its troubled past so as to accept the promise that tomorrow will be fairer and better. ■

Undoubtedly, the judicial system of Pakistan is beset with formidable problems of diverse nature, which have impeded the way of the country towards peace, progress and prosperity. Since long, the country's judiciary has been facing problems like a heavy backlog, rampant corruption, incompetent judicial and non-judicial staff, excessive favouritism and nepotism, inadequate use of technology and a poor research culture. The system is basically defective, thoroughly rotten and excessively divisive. The unsound judicial mechanism has not only tarnished the image of the nation but has also spread a stream of tyranny, unfairness and chaos. The heavy backlog of cases is evidenced by the fact that around 2.26 million cases are pending before the various courts of the country, while Pakistan has been

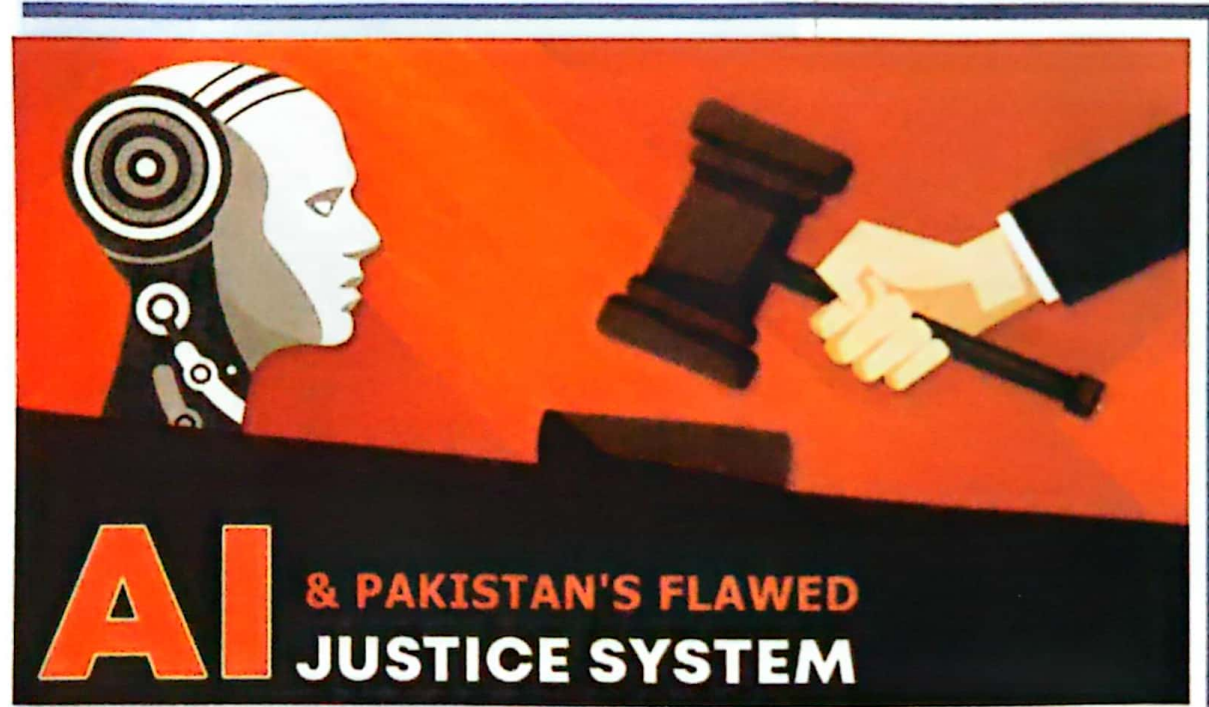
pathetic and deplorable state. In this regard, there is dire need for legal and judicial reforms and it seems inevitable if we want to transform the country's justice system. The integration and incorporation of technology and AI prove to be a great help in mitigating all ills and evils.

The use of AI can prove to be a panacea for all the problems ailing the judicial system of Pakistan. AI has the capacity and capability to manage case flows, legal documents and precedents efficiently. It has the potential to decide cases early and identify relevant precedents. In fact, a great variety of AI tools is beneficial for legal research. It provides insights into complex legal issues. In turn, the judges and lawyers can become more efficient and agile at preparing cases, drafting memos and making prudent decisions.

Currently, people belonging to remote areas of Pakistan have limited access to legal information and services. However, AI is the only tool that can improve the situation. The underserved and unprivileged communities and regions are faced with the complex issue of a lack of legal professionals. They can be served with the provision of chatbots and virtual assistants. AI can be used to provide basic legal information, knowledge and guidance to individuals who are unable to afford a legal counsel. Besides, poverty-

ridden and downtrodden people of the society are unable to get cheap and timely justice. However, AI tools can reduce costs, save time, minimize errors and optimize resource allocation.

In addition, AI can be beneficial for legal professionals, judges, lawyers, researchers, court staff and students. It augments intellect, widens vision and produces refined material for law professionals. It helps them find relevant precedents, make sound decisions and ensure consistency in rulings. AI can analyze past case outcomes. It has the potential to predict the likely outcome of current cases. It can help lawyers and judges make informed decisions. AI can summarize lengthy legal documents and judgments. It saves time and aids in quick comprehension. As a result, the knowledge, skills, understanding and research



ranked 130th out of 142 countries in terms of judicial efficacy. This alarming situation has led to a grave violation of the fundamental rights of the people of Pakistan and has forfeited constitutional virtues. Injustice, inequity and unfairness have become the norm of the day. Historically, this colonial judicial system was put into practice to enslave and subjugate the Subcontinent's masses and keep them at bay from the corridors of power and governance. Indeed, the advanced countries of the world, like the United States, France, Germany and others, have undertaken successful journeys in every segment of society due to a sound mechanism of the judiciary. They have been able to provide cheap and accessible justice, fairness and equity to their citizens on their doorstep. Sadly, the judicial system of Pakistan is in a

capabilities of the professionals will be refined and enhanced.

Additionally, the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) legislative framework in Pakistan is faced with multiple challenges. It has been suffering from a case backlog and the non-availability of ADR-oriented infrastructure and human resources. It is informal and traditional in nature. Interestingly, AI has the capacity to improve ADR methods like mediation, arbitration and mini-trials. It has the ability to evaluate the nature of disputes and suggest fair settlements. Thus, the burden on the courts can be reduced to a great extent.

Sadly, the legal system of Pakistan is beset with poor documentation management. It lacks a track-and-trace mechanism. The record rooms and branches of the court work on manual methods of record-keeping. These are heavily burdened. There is no mechanism to preserve documents and other evidence in times of natural calamities. Individuals are unable to easily access the required documents. Undeniably, steps have been taken towards digitalization but these are still insufficient and insignificant. However, AI tools can result in better case prioritization, assigning cases to judges, scheduling hearings, managing court calendars and allocating resources. Thus, timely and effective justice delivery is ensured for all and sundry.

Furthermore, many people have lost faith and confidence in the judicial system of Pakistan because of unnecessary delays, widespread biases, poor performance and a lack of transparency and accountability. Conversely, AI can track the progress of the cases and make court proceedings transparent. It helps identify biases, analyze data objectively, monitor judicial performance and ensure accountability. AI can help by making court data more accessible to the public. Besides, AI-powered platforms can educate the public about their legal rights and the judicial process. It fosters a more informed citizenry. This is how public trust in the country's judicial system can be increased through AI. AI can be vital to strengthening cybersecurity and data protection in the Pakistani judicial system. It can safeguard sensitive judicial data from cyberattacks. It ensures secure storage and prevents unauthorized access. It can monitor suspicious activities and identify malware and vulnerabilities. It can identify patterns and anomalies in financial transactions and legal documents. It may help detect fraud and prevent financial crimes. AI systems can monitor and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. It reduces the risk of legal penalties for organizations. It is crucial

for safeguarding the integrity of the legal proceedings. Thus, sensitive data is safeguarded in the event of cyberattacks.

Besides, AI can play a vital role in establishing a robust system for continuous judicial education. It can improve training and enhance capacity building. It may focus on both substantive and procedural law, as well as ethical standards. It encourages judges to specialize in specific areas of law to improve the quality of their judgments. It results in a reduction in trial times. AI-powered legal research tools can analyze a plethora of case laws and legal documents. It may prove helpful for judges to identify relevant precedents and legal arguments more efficiently. AI offers Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to judges, lawyers and professionals. It improves their understanding of this evolving field. In this connection, UNESCO offers a free MOOC on "AI and the Rule of Law".



The crux of the matter is that AI has the potential to radically transform the legal system of Pakistan. It can improve efficiency, the decision-making process, transparency and access to justice. It is supportive of delivering timely justice, empowers the parties and fosters a sense of belonging. Indubitably, there are legal, ethical and technical challenges in implementing AI in the judicial system of Pakistan. Immense care and seriousness are required while incorporating it. Indeed, legal decision-making and justice administration require unique human qualities like empathy, ethical reasoning, motivation and public trust. However, AI cannot replace human judges in the foreseeable future; it can, nevertheless, work as a supportive tool for a fair, accountable and trustworthy legal system. ■

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Pakistan is a country blessed with a diverse array of natural landscapes. Yet, beyond its scenic beauty, lies a treasure trove of energy resources. Energy can be obtained from many sources, such as water, wind, sunlight and fuels. These sources are classified as renewable or non-renewable. Non-renewable energy sources are essential to Pakistan's ability to meet its energy needs. The availability and use of each source are broken down as follows:

a. Natural gas

Natural gas, a clean, safe, efficient and environment-friendly fuel, is the most common energy source in Pakistan. Its indigenous supplies contribute about 28.9 percent (FY 2023) of the country's total primary energy supply mix. In addition, natural gas is necessary for cooking, heating and automobile and industrial fuel in homes.

b. Oil

The two main uses of oil are in the transport industry and the power sector, i.e. the production of electricity. Pakistan's reliance on foreign markets is seen in the fact that a sizeable amount of its oil is imported. Pakistan is a net importer of petroleum products and crude oil. Imports of petroleum products and crude oil during July-March FY 2024 were around 11.0 million tonnes, valued at around US\$ 8.4 billion.

c. Coal

Coal is an important energy source, and the power sector uses a significant share of coal for electricity generation. It is also used extensively in the cement industry. Indigenous coal resources are reasonably substantial and sufficient to meet the country's requirements on a long-term, sustainable basis - Pakistan has over 3000 million tonnes of coal reserves. Recently, huge reserves of coal have been discovered in the Thar Desert

in Sindh, though Balochistan primarily used to be the most important coal-mining region.

d. Nuclear

As contributing to the energy mix, nuclear energy adds 8.4% to power generation in the country. Pakistan intends to grow this industry and currently operates a few nuclear power stations.

We know how crucial each of these resources is to Pakistan, but it is noteworthy to take a look at how each of these can cause problems too, thus allowing us to examine the extent to which Pakistan can make use of its non-renewables.

On the one hand, Pakistan relies on non-renewable energy sources to get energy and to make sure it has enough of it to keep the country safe and stable. On

POWER RESOURCES

To what extent can Pakistan make use of its renewables and non-renewables?



Generation of Electricity

Source	FY2023		July-March FY2023		July-March FY2024	
	GWh	Share (%)	GWh	Share (%)	GWh	Share (%)
Hydel	36,254.80	28.11	26,936.90	28.93	29,167.10	31.67
Thermal	62,639.00	48.57	43,525.60	46.75	42,249.20	45.88
Nuclear	24,054.60	18.65	18,738.80	20.13	16,753.70	18.19
Renewable	6,014.30	4.66	3,909.90	4.20	3,921.00	4.26
Total	128,962.70		93,111.20		92,091.00	

Source: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority

the other hand, relying too much on these sources can cause problems. During the last seven years, more than 450 casualties have been reported in various accidents in the coal mines of Balochistan. Such accidents not only cause damage to human life but also demoralize investors, thereby hampering the growth of the mining industry. The conditions of Balochistan's mining industry are horrifying. Narrow tunnels in the coal mines of Balochistan reach depths of eight feet or more, but without proper ventilation systems. Not only this, mines are often dug without following international standards, and miners have no awareness of safety standards and equipment. When coal and oil are burned, they release particles that can pollute the air, water and land. Fair Finance Pakistan estimates that at least 128,000 deaths occur in Pakistan every year due to pollution. A study conducted by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) found that water quality in rivers and streams near mining areas, such as in Balochistan and Punjab, is often contaminated with heavy metals and other pollutants.

Pakistan has also enhanced its use of nuclear energy in the past few years. The Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP), commissioned in 1971, was Pakistan's first nuclear power station and many more have been built since then. Though they produce very low emissions of carbon dioxide, concerns have been raised that nuclear waste remains radioactive for many years and can cause health problems such as cancer or children being born deformed.

Due to the harmful impacts of using fossil fuels, there is a rising need in Pakistan for alternative energy sources. Pakistan needs to increase its energy output, as its progress and growth are very much linked to the availability of energy for industrial, agricultural and domestic purposes. Pakistan is an energy-deficient

country and spends a large amount of foreign exchange annually on importing oil to meet its energy requirements. In May 2024 alone, Pakistan imported \$1.577 billion worth of oil. Therefore, the need to develop alternative energy sources has become a pressing requirement for the country.

We know that Pakistan's natural gas reserves are depleting and the country faces challenges in maintaining supply levels. Oil is largely imported, making its availability subject to international market fluctuations and geopolitical factors and constantly putting Pakistan in financial debt. Although coal availability has improved with new mining operations, the environmental impact remains a concern. Nuclear energy is limited by the availability of technology and

Ongoing IPPs (MW)

Year	Wind	Solar	Bagasse	Hydro	Imported Coal	Total
2024	-	100	32	884	-	1,016
2025	-	132	-	7.0	300	439
2026	100	-	-	8.0	-	108
Total	100	232	32	899	300	1,563

Source: Private Power and Infrastructure Board

international regulations on nuclear materials. According to a report, Pakistan has 32 operational hydroelectric power plants, more than that of natural gas (13) and nuclear (6) power plants put together. Water is a renewable source that is used to generate hydroelectric power (HEP) and will not deplete. HEP is environmentally friendly, allowing Pakistan to fulfil its global commitments. Pakistan is a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement, which aim to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. By fulfilling these obligations, Pakistan can access international funding, technical assistance and partnerships. It is certainly true that HEP stations have certain physical and climatic requirements for their development; however, Pakistan can develop its HEP stations

Sectoral Consumption of Petroleum Products 000 MT

Sector	FY2023	July-March FY2023	July-March FY2024	Change (%)
Domestic	17.95	13.55	18.80	38.80
Industry	1,126.85	889.71	815.32	-8.36
Agriculture	9.21	7.40	10.16	37.31
Transport	13,606.63	10,254.53	9,764.55	-4.78
Power	1,668.15	1,417.08	520.70	-63.26
Government	365.09	262.26	224.70	-14.32
Overseas	696.85	416.63	948.03	127.55
Total	17,490.73	13,261.15	12,302.25	-7.23

Source: Petroleum Division, Ministry of Energy

in the northern areas, and it is continuing to do so. Hydel power made up 25.4% of electricity generation in FY 2023-24 (Source: Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-2024). The main problems Pakistan faces in setting up hydroelectric stations are financial constraints and a lack of technical assistance. Though the initial investment is high, operational costs are low, water is more sustainable source; thus, it promises a secure and safe future for the coming generations. As far as technical assistance is concerned, Pakistan needs to make use of the technical assistance offered by Iceland worldwide and its scholarship programmes for students. Or, Pakistan could actually import renewable energy sources through bilateral trade agreements with Iceland.

Here's how it goes. In 2022, Iceland imported aluminium oxide worth approximately \$656 million. The principal ore for extracting aluminium oxide is bauxite. Bauxite reserves in the Khushab district of Punjab are estimated to be 74 million tons. Pakistan can export this available bauxite and, in return, avail technical assistance or labour expertise from Iceland.

Apart from hydroelectric energy, Pakistan has enough potential for solar energy. Pakistan geographically lies close to the equator and experiences 250-300 sunny days in many parts of the country. It can be used for rural electrification and can be set up by individuals in their households. Though the initial setup cost is high, once installed, solar panels can provide a long-term benefit.

Moreover, Pakistan can make use of the wind power for electricity generation or other uses. The coastline of Pakistan is about 1365 km long and

has a population of approximately 10 million people, with high wind available mostly a year. The wind speed along the Balochistan and Sindh coasts means that it can be used to generate electricity. The Jhimpir Wind Corridor is located in Sindh province and is a hub for wind energy projects with several operational wind farms. It has the potential to produce 11,000MW of electricity. Also

the desert areas of Pakistan can harness both solar and wind energy.

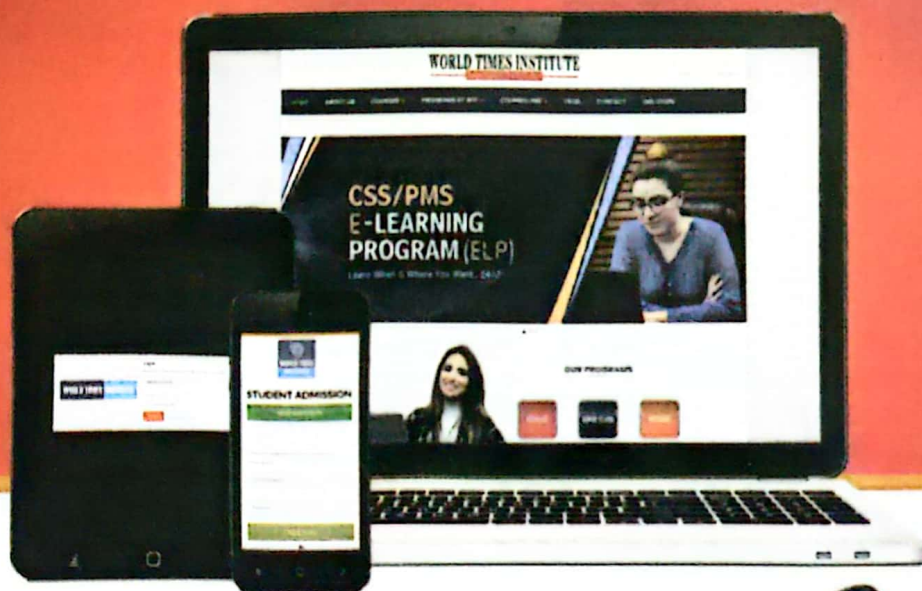
Renewable sources of electricity cannot be available 'always', but they are sustainable, give long-term benefits and are almost non-polluting. Pakistan is not yet financially stable enough to import a large amount of fossil fuels, not to mention that they are already in short supply. If we examine Pakistan geographically, hydroelectric power can be generated in the country's northern parts, solar energy and wind energy can be generated in central Pakistan, and tidal or wind energy can be produced in the southern regions. The government of Pakistan needs to raise awareness among its people to make use of alternative energy sources and focus more on such projects. It is true that this energy might not be sufficient, but if Pakistan focuses on developing this energy on a larger scale by adopting multi-faceted approaches, it can make use of its renewable energy sources to a greater extent and is less likely to rely on non-renewable energy sources, and will have to import fewer fossil fuels. ■

The writer is a student.





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In Conversation with **Sana Ijaz (PAS)** 5th in Pakistan; CSS 2023-24

"I found my experience at WTI very enlightening in various aspects"

JWT Editorial Board

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell us about your educational background.

Sana Ijaz (SI): I did my BSc from Kasur, and then earned my LLB degree from Punjab University, Lahore.

JWT: As you have been allocated to Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), what was the most attractive feature of this service for you?

SI: The PAS, comprising top-tier bureaucrats, plays a vital role in governing the country, managing districts, shaping policies and overseeing key administrative and revenue matters at provincial and federal levels.

JWT: How was your experience at the World Times Institute?

SI: World Times books for CSS and its YouTube lecture series helped me a lot in my preparation for the CSS written exam. Later, when I joined WTI for interview preparation, I was truly impressed by how systematically the whole institute works.

JWT: What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying updated with current affairs shape your success?

SI: Not specifically newspapers; any other kind of platform that keeps you updated on what's going on around the globe is equally significant to prepare for the current affairs part of the exam. However, reading a newspaper does help you refine your writing style and draft opinions.

JWT: What was your overall strategy for cracking the CSS exam?

SI: One thing that I realized quite late in my journey was to trust myself. One needs to keep up one's morale and never lose sight of one's goals.

JWT: What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?

SI: Primarily, I took up one subject at a time, along with some smaller things side by side. For example, if I was working on an optional subject, I would take up little

things like the ones from Précis paper or MCQs of a subject that I had already prepared for. I used to go through columns, opinions and articles either at night or while taking an evening walk, through audio play.

JWT: What, in your opinion, is the key to making a difference in the written part of the CSS exam?

SI: The key to making a difference in the written part of the CSS exam is to demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject matter combined with clear, logical, and well-supported writing. Work on developing and strengthening your analytical skills, original thinking and effective communication

Produce standout answers that impress examiners and set you apart from others.

JWT: Generally, compulsory subjects are considered low-scoring, what was your strategy to get through these very papers?

SI: In some compulsory subjects, you can score well more easily than in others. For instance, by putting

Detailed Marks Sheet	
Subject	Marks
Compulsory Subjects	
Essay	40
English Précis & Composition	64
GSA	68
Current Affairs	61
Pakistan Affairs	55
Islamiat	58
Optional Subjects	
Political Science	111
Governance and Public Policies	69
Gender Studies	79
Criminology	60
Punjabi	80
Total Written	745
Viva Voce	145
Grand Total	890

My Tips

Selection of optional subjects

1. Select subjects related to your academic background or work experience, making it easier to prepare.
2. Opt for subjects that are relevant to current affairs and issues.
3. Spread out your optional subjects across different groups or categories to minimize overlap.
4. Regularly review your progress and

adjust your strategy as needed.

Notes-making

1. Don't go through anything without extracting your own notes out of it.
2. Prepare both long and short concise notes.
3. Make your own notes, and not rely only on the ones made by others.
4. Use diagrams, flowcharts, and mind maps to visualize complex information.

Revision

1. Revise from your own notes.
2. Practice past papers or mock exams during revisions.
3. Teach the material to someone else to reinforce your own understanding.
4. Utilize digital tools, such as flashcard apps or online quizzing platforms, to supplement your revision.

Rapid Fire

Your inspiration	Hazrat Umar 's (RA) administrative excellence and commitment to justice
Attempts	01
Qualification	LLB
Alma mater	Punjab University Law College, Lahore
Schooling medium	English
Your study schedule	10-12 hours a day
Your sources	FPSC-recommended books, Books by WTI Publications and You Tube
Academy or Institute you joined	World Times Institute (for interview preparation)
Group preferences	1. PAS 2. PSP 3. PCS 4. FSP
Why PAS?	PAS offers multiple opportunities to grow and expand one's abilities throughout your lifetime
Hobbies	I try to learn at least one new skill every year.
Fave personality	Hazrat Umar (RA)
Fave book	Reasons to Stay Alive by Matt Haig
Fave quote	"Your mind is a galaxy. More dark than light. But the light makes it worthwhile. Which is to say, don't kill yourself. Even when the darkness is total. Always know that life is not still. Time is space. You are moving through that galaxy. Wait for the stars." — Matt Haig
Secret of your success	Hard work & humility
Your role model	Hazrat Umar (RA)

just a little more effort, you can get better marks in Précis and GSA papers. Secondly, by understanding the templates of CA and PA papers, you can attempt their questions better and easily get a higher score in those too.

JWT: How should one write answers to get maximum marks?

SI: The answer should be crisp and to the point. Provide a brief explanation or context only if necessary. Avoid rambling or going off-topic. Put in as much evidence as you can and use a clear logical format to structure your answers.

JWT: Should there be some word limit kept in mind while writing answers?

SI: Keeping a strict word limit in mind is not necessary. Just make a general template for your answers in your

mind. Understand what is being asked and then try to cover the answer within your template. However, don't limit yourself to that either.

JWT: How should one structure the Essay and what should be the strategy for Précis and Composition Paper?

SI: For Essay, take a few minutes to carefully read the topic chosen and understand it. Presenting a well-organized and persuasive essay that showcases your writing skills and knowledge of the topic, would lead to better marks.

The best strategy for Précis and Composition paper is lots of practice.

JWT: What should be an ideal timetable for a new aspirant to make sound preparation for the CSS exam?

SI: An ideal time table is what doesn't exhaust you in a day or two, and so it is different for everyone. Don't follow others' footprints blindly, pave your own way.

JWT: What areas should the new aspirants focus on while preparing for the CSS exam?

SI: New aspirants should focus on building a strong foundation in subjects like English, Pakistan & World Affairs, History and Geography, while also developing essential skills like critical thinking, analytical writing and time management.

JWT: What was the importance of revision in your preparation strategy?

SI: I believe, revision plays a very crucial part. It assists in producing the maximum knowledge on paper.

Advice to fresh aspirants

By maintaining your commitment and resolve, you will ultimately attain your aspirations and achieve success.



Europe back in space

European Space Agency's (ESA) Ariane 6 rocket successfully blasted off for the first time on Tuesday, releasing satellites into orbit and restoring Europe's independent access to space



People attend a public screening of the Ariane 6 rocket launch in Toulouse, France

What was the mission?

Launched from Europe's spaceport, the flight deployed three sets of micro-satellites for research purposes. It was carrying a payload of university microsatellites, various experiments and two atmospheric re-entry capsules

Ariane 6: A lowdown

Developed at an estimated cost of €4 billion, Ariane 6 was selected by ESA in 2014. It will be able to place satellites in geostationary orbit 36,000 km above the Earth and satellite constellations hundreds of kilometres up

Human to scale

Hiccup during first flight

About two-and-a-half-hours into the flight, ESA announced that the upper portion of the rocket had suffered an unspecified problem that led to its auxiliary power unit shutting off. As a result, the final batch of payloads - two small capsules designed to test the conditions for surviving re-entry - remained stuck onboard

Return to space map

European space efforts have suffered a series of blows, including four years of delays to Ariane 6, that have robbed the continent of its own way to launch missions into space. Since ESA retired its workhorse Ariane 5 rocket more than a year ago, Europe has had no independent means of sending its satellites into space, while the war in Ukraine has cut Western ties to Russian Soyuz rockets

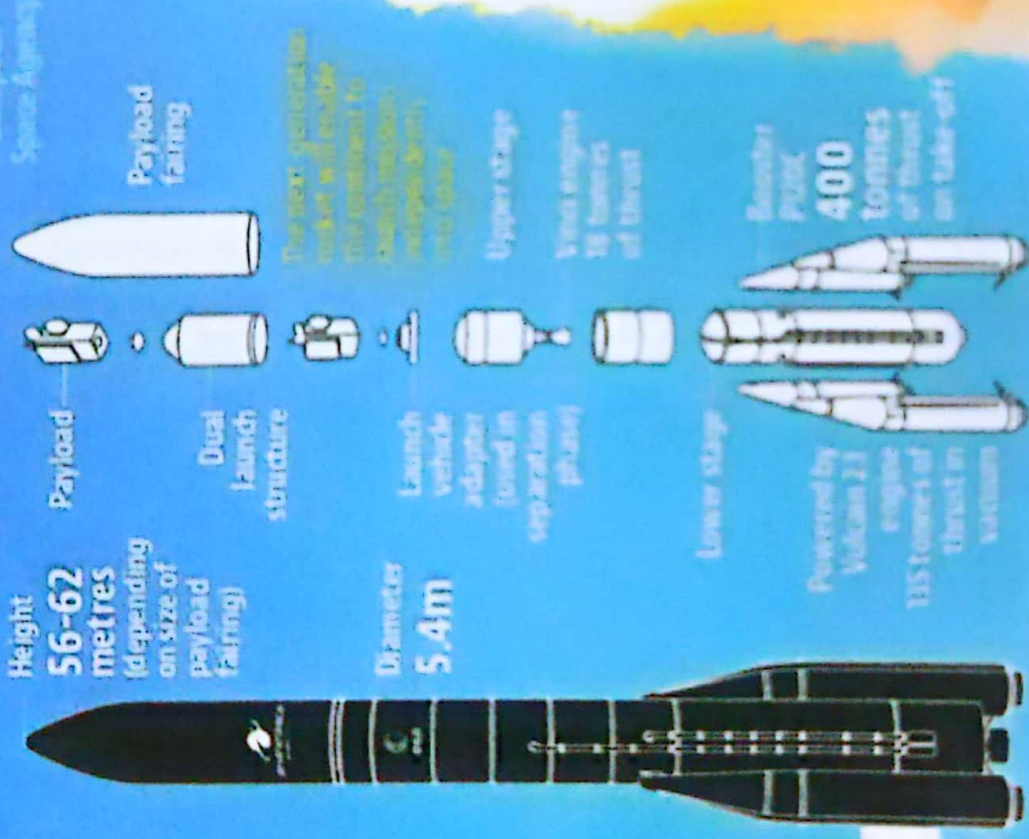
Ariane 6 is fundamental for Europe's space ambition. It is about sovereign access to space for institutional and governmental missions, and this need has been even more emphasised in view of the geopolitical situation.

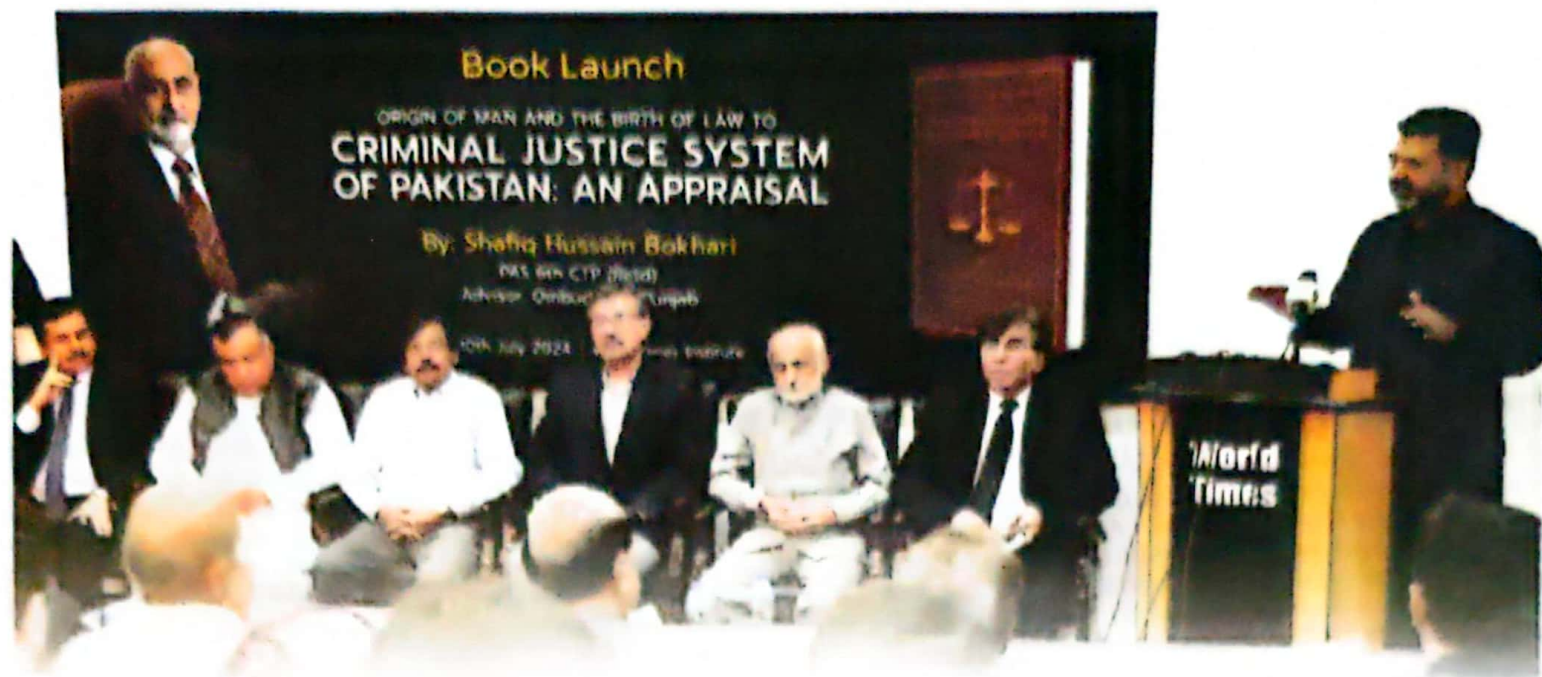
- TONI TOLKER-NIELSEN, ESA's acting director of space transportation

Rocket launches since 1957



European Space Agency





BOOK Launch Ceremony @ WTI





PARIS 1900

Welcome Ladies!

In 1900, women competed in the Olympics for the first time, participating in golf and tennis. This marked a significant step towards gender equality in sports. At the Paris Games, **Charlotte Cooper** became the first female Olympic champion by winning tennis singles, paving the way for greater female participation in future Games.



PARIS 1900

Team Spirit

The first team sport added to the Olympics was football (soccer) in 1900. Held in Paris, this event marked the introduction of team-based competitions to the Games, setting a precedent for the inclusion of other team sports in future Olympics.



ST. LOUIS 1904

The Medals

The 1904 St. Louis Olympics were the first to award gold, silver, and bronze medals for first, second, and third place. This new tradition set the standard for future Games, providing a clear and consistent way to honour athletic achievement and recognise the top three competitors in each event.



LONDON 1948

Games Go Live

In 1948, the London Olympic Games were broadcast live on television for the first time, allowing millions to watch from home. The BBC's extensive coverage significantly expanded the reach and impact of the Games, marking a landmark in sports broadcasting. This innovation brought the excitement of the Olympics to a broader audience, paving the way for future global television coverage.



MELBOURNE 1956

First TV Rights

In 1956, the Melbourne Olympic Games marked a milestone by selling international television rights for the first time. This allowed broadcasters outside the host nation to televise the Games, significantly increasing the global audience. This development transformed the Olympics into a truly worldwide event and paved the way for future lucrative broadcasting deals, turning the Games into a major global media spectacle.



MEXICO CITY 1968

Black Power Salute

In 1968, during the Mexico City Olympics medal ceremony for the men's 200 metres, American athletes **Tommie Smith** and **John Carlos** raised their fists in a Black Power salute to protest racial inequality in the U.S. Wearing black gloves and socks without shoes to symbolise Black power, their act became an iconic symbol of the civil rights movement, sparking global controversy.



MOSCOW 1980

Boycott USSR

In 1980, the U.S. led a boycott of the Moscow Olympics to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Supported by 65 countries, including Japan, West Germany, and Canada, the boycott aimed to condemn Soviet actions and pressure a withdrawal. This geopolitical move significantly reduced participation, sparking debates on politics in sports and intensifying Cold War tensions.



LOS ANGELES 1984

Boycott USA

In 1984, the Soviet Union led a boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics, retaliating against the U.S.-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games. Joined by 15 Soviet allies, they cited security concerns and alleged commercialisation. This politically motivated boycott impacted the competition, but the Los Angeles Games still achieved success with record participation and global media coverage.



TOKYO 2020

Games Postponed

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games were postponed to July 23 to August 8, 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented delay ensured the safety of athletes, officials, and spectators, marking the first time the Olympics were postponed rather than cancelled. The event retained the "Tokyo 2020" name despite the rescheduling.



📍 **ANTWERP 1920**

Symbol & Oath

In 1920, the Olympic Games adopted the five interlocking rings symbolising global unity, designed by **Pierre de Coubertin**. The Antwerp Games also introduced the Olympic oath, first sworn by Belgian fencer Victor Boin, embodying fair play and sportsmanship, with athletes pledging to compete honourably and follow the rules.



📍 **AMSTERDAM 1928**

The Flame

In 1928, the Olympic flame was introduced for the first time at the Amsterdam Games. Inspired by ancient Greek customs, this tradition involves lighting a flame at Olympia, Greece, and transporting it to the host city, where it remains burning throughout the Games. The flame symbolises the enduring spirit of the Olympics, connecting ancient and modern games, and embodies ideals of peace, unity, and friendship among nations.



📍 **LOS ANGELES 1932**

The Photo Finish

In 1932, the Los Angeles Olympic Games introduced the photo finish, a technological innovation that allowed for accurate determination of race outcomes, particularly in closely contested events. Using a camera to capture the exact moment athletes crossed the finish line provided a precise and indisputable method for identifying winners and ranking competitors.



📍 **MUNICH 1972**

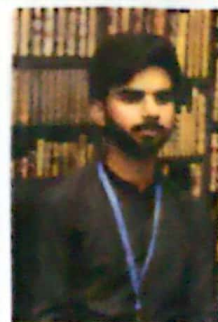
Munich Massacre

In 1972, the Munich Olympics were marred by a terrorist attack where 11 Israeli team members were killed. Eight members of Black September took hostages, demanding prisoner releases. A failed rescue attempt led to the deaths of the hostages, five terrorists, and a German officer. Known as the Munich Massacre, this event led to significant changes in Olympic security.



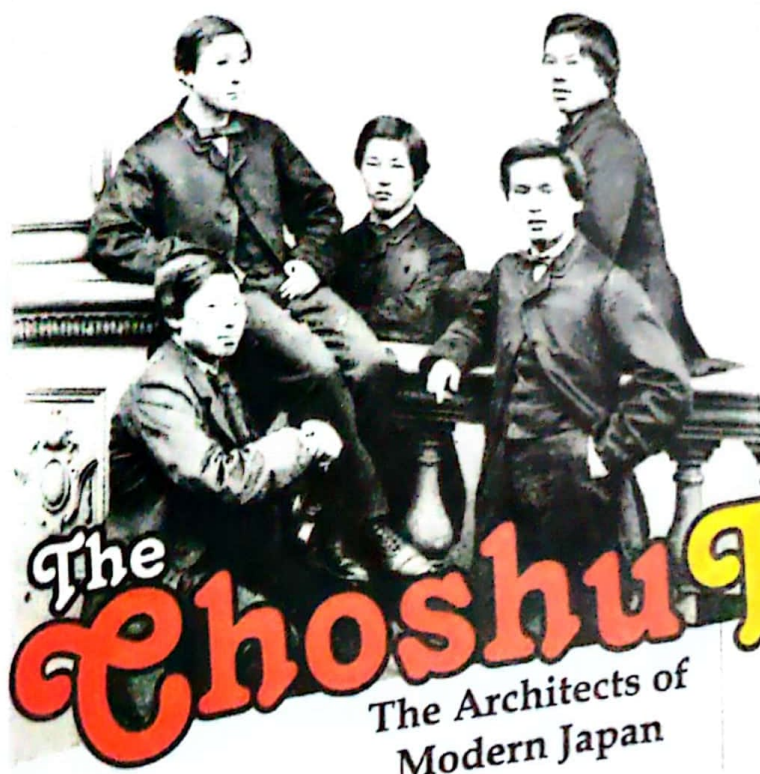
The Olympic Firsts





Winners of **Précis & Comprehension Competition**





On June 27, 1863, five young noblemen from feudal Japan set sail from Yokohama for Britain to study at the University of London. These five men from the Choshu Domain were not only the first Japanese students to enrol at a prestigious British university but also the first to travel overseas to pursue an education. Came to be known as the Choshu Five, these five young men, after completing their education, returned to Japan and went on to form the core of a new Japanese government, leading the nation's

transformation from an isolated state to one of the world's foremost technological powers.

On June 27, 1863, five samurai from the Choshu domain - Ito Hirobumi, Inoue Kaoru, Inoue Masaru, Endo Kinsuke, and Yamao Yozo - covertly left Japan by ship for Britain at a time when it was extremely difficult for a Japanese to travel overseas. The aim of their voyage was to study Western technology and thereby become "living instruments"—in the words of Inoue Kaoru—to effectively advance the *joi* movement to expel foreigners, which was then championed by Choshu, and prepare for international diplomacy. The five began by learning English, visiting various facilities and studying analytical chemistry at University College London. Ito and Inoue Kaoru cut their studies short after a few months, however, and went back to Japan when news came of the 1863-64 bombardments of Shimonoseki in Choshu by the joint naval forces of foreign countries seeking control of the Shimonoseki Straits.

These five individuals, who went on to become important leaders of the new Japan, were:

1. Ito Hirobumi: The Father of the Japanese Constitution & Parliamentary Government in Japan

Perhaps the most influential member of the Choshu Five, Ito Hirobumi went on to become Japan's first Prime Minister and one of the principal architects of the Meiji Constitution. His experiences in the West significantly shaped his views on government and modernization, and he played a key role in establishing the foundations of modern Japan.

2. Inoue Kaoru: The Father of Modern Japanese Diplomacy

Inoue was a prominent statesman and diplomat who served in various important government positions, including Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Finance. His contributions to Japan's foreign policy and economic reforms were crucial during the early Meiji era. He was instrumental in renegotiating unequal treaties with Western powers and fostering Japan's industrial development.

3. Yamao Yozo: The Father of Japanese Engineering

Ahmad Nauman Yamao focused on the fields of engineering and education. After studying in Britain, he became a leading figure in the development of Japan's industrial and technological infrastructure. Yamao was instrumental in establishing technical education in Japan, including the foundation of what would become the University of Tokyo's engineering faculty.

4. Endo Kinsuke: The Father of the Modern Japanese Mint

Endo played a significant role in the modernization of Japan's finance and banking systems. After returning from Britain, he was involved in the establishment of the Japanese Mint and other financial institutions that were crucial for the country's economic transformation during the Meiji period.

5. Inoue Masaru: The Father of Japanese Railways

Although less prominent than his compatriots, Nomura contributed to Japan's maritime and naval development. He worked in various capacities to help build Japan's naval capabilities, which were essential for the nation's defense and its aspirations to become a global power.

All of the Choshu Five played central roles in a new government tasked with transforming Japan from an isolated, inward-looking state to a global power. Their understanding of the West became the foundation for Japan's modernisation, and in only 40 years, the country emerged as one of the world's foremost technological superpowers.

The story of the 'Choshu Five' is testimony to the transformative power of global higher education. Their experiences in London marked a turning point in Japanese history... And after returning to Japan, the Choshu Five did indeed apply what they had learned in London to help transform their country, making them pioneers of modern Japan, both as a group and individually. ■

The writer is a student of history.

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell something about your educational background.

Sanaullah Khan (SK): I graduated from BZU, Multan, in 2022.

JWT: How helpful did you find

Jahangir's World Times (JWT) in your preparation for the PMS exam?

SK: JWT's magazine and books on various subjects have been quite helpful in my preparation. I also followed JWT's YouTube channel to prepare for my CSS and PMS interviews.

JWT: What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying updated with current affairs shape your success?

SK: Newspaper reading was pivotal in my preparation for CSS and PMS exams. It kept me updated with current affairs and helped me cover diverse topics such as politics, economics and international relations. Moreover, editorials and opinion pieces helped me develop analytical skills and form informed viewpoints, essential for success in the written exam as well as the interview.

JWT: What was your overall strategy for cracking the PMS exam?

SK: My strategy comprised smart

work and understanding the psychology of the question paper and that of the examiner.

JWT: What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?

SK: I began preparing for the CSS and PMS exams during my degree program. Typically, I studied at night from 9–12 p.m. After completing my degree, I allocated more time to writing practice, evaluation and gathering authentic facts and statistics.

JWT: What, in your opinion, is the key to getting through the compulsory papers of the PMS exam, especially that of General Knowledge?

SK: For an aspirant with a strong command of English, mastering essay technique is crucial. Additionally, tackling the précis paper would not pose difficulties for such a candidate. In Islamic Studies, it is essential to include Quranic verses and ahadith in Arabic. For Pakistan Studies, aspirants must prepare the events analytically. They must know the causes and impacts of each event.

As for the General Knowledge paper, I would recommend that candidates maintain a dedicated register, organizing topic-specific MCQs efficiently. Since this paper has no specific syllabus, preparation can be done casually, even integrating it into everyday activities like browsing on your mobile or during walks.

JWT: How should answers be written to get maximum marks in the written part of the PMS exam?

SK: To score well in the written part of the PMS exam:

- Understand the question thoroughly and structure your

Sanaullah Khan

6th in Punjab; PMS 2022-23

"JWT's magazine and books of various subjects have been quite helpful in my preparation."

IN CONVERSATION WITH



Detailed Marks Sheet

Subject	Marks
Compulsory Subjects	
English Essay	40
English (Précis & Composition)	63
General Knowledge	59
Urdu	68
Pakistan Affairs	65
Islamic Studies	54
Optional Subjects	
1. Political Science	148
2. Social Work	150
3. Punjabi	144
Total Written	791
Viva Voce	128.8
Grand Total	919.8



Advice for Fresh Aspirants

- Have a firm aim.
- Work smart.
- Select a mentor who is both ruthless and loyal.
- Follow and trust your own strategy.
- Be humble and spiritually strong.
- Study more and more.

answer clearly with an introduction, body paragraphs supported by evidence and a concise conclusion.

- Write catchy headings for each paragraph.
- Analyze the topic critically, exploring different perspectives and implications.
- Use specific facts, maps, graphs and examples.
- Write clearly and coherently.

JWT: How did you structure your Essay?

SK: I chose an abstract theme because of my extensive knowledge of history and literature. In the body paragraphs, I incorporated practical manifestations and historical examples.

JWT: You have scored excellent marks in Political Science and Social Work, what was your strategy for both these papers?

SK: For political science, I read

several books. Additionally, I covered many topics through resources on Google and YouTube. For social work, I studied intensively over a period of 10-12 days using online sources.

JWT: Should there be some word limit kept in mind while writing answers?

SK: I think the focus should be on providing comprehensive answers that directly address the question's requirements. While the word limit is important, the priority should be

SK: I think aspirants should focus on selecting subjects that align with their interests, academic background and strengths.

JWT: As interviewers usually grill the interview candidates, how did you manage the situation?

SK: I had the experience of participating in various time-sensitive moot court competitions where a person has to emphatically communicate in a short time. That experience gave me foundation for

Rapid Fire

Your inspiration	My father
Attempts	01
Schooling medium	English
Your qualification	LLB (Hons.) – Silver Medallist
Other achievements	Won various article- and essay-writing competitions; won distinctions in Policymaking and Moot Court competitions
Alma mater	Gillani Law College, BZU, Multan
Your study schedule	9-12 (at night)
Your sources	Recommend readings & Internet
Your hobbies	Reading, workout, music
Your strength	I know my weaknesses well
Fave personality	My father
Fave book	No god, but God by Reza Aslan
Fave quote	"Vision without power does bring more elevation but cannot give a lasting culture. Power without vision tends to become destructive and inhumane. Both must combine for the spiritual expansion of humanity." — Allama Iqbal
Secret of your success	Mental clarity, perseverance, spiritually motivated

on delivering quality content that

My Interview Experience

The panel asked me questions from diverse fields ranging from literature to history and from politics to current affairs.

demonstrates understanding, analysis, and relevance to the topic.

JWT: How one should choose Optional Subjects?

speaking logically and coherently. To be honest, I had no such pressure for the interview.

JWT: Who deserves the credit for your success?

SK: First of all, I bow to Almighty Allah for my success. Then, I owe much to my parents for their unwavering support and encouragement. The guidance of my teachers and mentors has also been instrumental in my journey.

Selection of optional subjects

Choose subjects in which you have genuine interest and strong academic background.

Notes-Making

When preparing detailed notes, use headings, subheadings, bullet points and numbering to logically structure your content. Incorporate diagrams, charts and mind maps to visualize complex concepts and enhance your

understanding.

For short notes, focus on writing concise summaries using short sentences and key phrases to capture essential information effectively.

MY TIPS ON

Rafaqat Ali Liaquat

Assistant Secretary/
Assistant Controller
BISE Rawalpindi

"JWT magazine is a perfect guidebook for competitive exams."



JWT Edit. Board

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): Please tell us about your educational background.

Rafaqat Ali Liaquat (RAL): I have done my matriculation and intermediate from Shakargarh. After that, I graduated from the University of the Punjab, Lahore. Recently, I have completed my masters in Political Science from the same institution.

JWT: How long did it take you to prepare for Naib Tehsildar (Punjab Revenue Department) exam?

RAL: I have been preparing for competitive exams since 2021. During this time, I kept appearing in One-Paper exams conducted by PPSC and FPSC and got finally recommended by PPSC for the post of Assistant Secretary/Assistant Controller BISE Rawalpindi. I joined this post as I feel that job security is very important. It relieves you of extra pressure and you feel more confident and motivated while preparing for CSS and PMS.

JWT: What were your principal resources for the preparation for this exam?

RAL: My principal resources included PPSC and FPSC past papers, JWT magazine, several GK books, newspapers and multiple online sources.

JWT: How helpful was JWT in your preparation for competitive exams?

RAL: JWT magazine helped me enhance my understanding of national and international issues as it is a compendium of well-researched articles. In my opinion, it is a perfect guidebook for competitive exams.

JWT: How was your experience at the World Times Institute?

RAL: I joined WTI for interview preparation. The panel here was highly professional and amicable. They identified my strengths and weaknesses and helped me work on the latter in a short period. I will always be indebted and thankful to WTI for making this achievement easier for me.

JWT: How should new aspirants start preparations for the various one-paper exams?

RAL: Firstly, new aspirants should consult PPSC and FPSC

past papers. This would help them in knowing the nature of the exams that will aid them in making a good preparation strategy. Secondly, they should improve their English grammar and vocabulary. Thirdly, they should prepare GK portions like Geography, History, Pakistan Affairs, Islamiat, Urdu, Science and Maths by consulting quality books.

JWT: What areas should they focus on?

RAL: By appearing in different exams, consulting past papers and GK-based books! The focus should be on weak areas. Furthermore the candidates should also focus on paper-attempting techniques as MCQs-based tests demand smartness.

JWT: What is, in your opinion, an ideal timetable for a sound preparation?

RAL: It varies from person to person but, in my opinion, 6 to 8 months are more than enough for good preparation.

JWT: What strategy should the in-job aspirants adopt as they have scant time at their disposal?

RAL: Smart study is the best approach for in-job aspirants. They can cover current affairs, MCQs and vocabulary by reading newspaper in office. Furthermore, they should carry GK and other study material in their mobiles and laptops. They can use internet in breaks. During office hours, they should limit social interaction. They can spend weekends on studying for long hours.

JWT: How did you handle the interview pressure while before the panel?

RAL: I did knowledge-based preparation which gave me a sense of confidence during the interview. I also appeared in mock interviews at WTI before the final interview and that practice helped me to relieving the pressure.

JWT: On the basis of your experience, what tips you would give to the prospective aspirants?

RAL: The journey is full of troubles, failures, discouragements and a long wait. One should not lose hope during this journey and take failures as a motivation and stay patient. The world belongs to those who have vision, energy, motivation and direction in life. ■





The widespread abuse and exploitation of women are not confined to a particular area or a region or a country; they are happening across the globe, endangering women's lives and gravely shaking their dignity. This

is gender-based violence (GBV) that has become a profound societal issue that extends beyond individual harm to threatening the very fabric of societies. Defined as violence against an individual based on his/her gender, GBV encompasses various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional and economic exploitation. This sort of violence fractures social cohesion by breeding fear and mistrust among community members. It undermines relationships and breaks the bonds that hold societies together. The perpetuation of violence normalizes harmful behaviours, perpetuating cycles of aggression and trauma.

GBV is a pervasive problem that primarily targets women, often inflicted by their spouses. As analyzed in John Simister's book, "Gender-Based Violence: Causes and Remedies," this form of violence encompasses physical, sexual and emotional abuse, collectively undermining women's safety and well-being. Simister emphasizes the term 'gender-based violence' to underscore the systemic nature of such acts, which not only threaten women's physical integrity but also erode their dignity and autonomy. GBV impedes the interconnected dimensions of women's empowerment in any society — personal autonomy and social responsibility. The peer culture of masculinity and harmful masculine norms shape men's attitudes towards women, enforcing aggression, dominance and control.

However, the already established culture of structural aggression, patriarchy, rigid gender stereo-

typing, outdated social norms, unconscious bias and micro-aggressions in Pakistan and other parts of the world have created an environment where women feel insecure and are unable to realize their true potential as equal contributors to the well-being of society. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms that valorize aggression, dominance and control as masculine traits contribute to a culture that condones and perpetuates violence against women. Social attitudes that minimize the seriousness of GBV and blame victims further entrench these harmful behaviours.

Pakistan is a country where women not only face various forms of discrimination in their daily lives but also experience oppression, subjugation and the undermining of their identity as human beings. According to the 2024 Gender Gap Index released by the World Economic Forum, Pakistan has been ranked as the second-worst country in terms of gender parity - 145 out of 146 states. The country ranks 145th on economic participation and opportunity, 143rd on health and survival, 135th on educational attainment and 95th on political participation. This poor ranking highlights the urgent need for state and institutional action to eliminate GBV, promote gender parity and challenge societal barriers.

A UN report on femicide released last year on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, reveals that every 11 minutes, a woman or girl is killed by an intimate partner or a family member. These chilling statistics show that millions of women are vulnerable to this lethal issue, which severely affects their mental, physical and emotional health, relationships and productivity.

Moreover, a report released by the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) indicates that around

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The collapse of society

63,000 cases of violence were reported across the country in a single year, with 80% related to domestic violence and 47% involving marital rape. Various harsh and inhuman incidents of GBV have occurred in recent years, which are heart-wrenching and indicative of the state's failure to address and eliminate this cycle of violence and human rights violations. Such cases occur in both urban and rural areas, with rural regions often being worse due to isolation and societal pressures. The brutal incident of Mukhtaran Mai, who was gang-raped on the order of a tribal council and the murder of Noor Muqaddam, a former diplomat's daughter, highlight that these atrocities affect both the elite and lower echelons of society.

Additionally, women in Pakistan are not safe even in educational institutions and at workplaces. Many cases have been reported from Pakistani universities where teachers harassed female students, exploiting the grading system to make them cower in. At workplaces, women face harassment related to promotions and other power dynamics, driven by a troika of misogyny, patriarchy and structural suppression. The lack of women in political participation, decision-making, economic opportunities, educational attainment, healthcare and family planning is due to hyper-masculinity, social norms and constructed discourses. These issues mirror the deep-rooted patriarchy, outdated social norms, oppressive ritual systems and the poor response to, as well as the implementation of existing laws in the country.

It is indispensable for the incumbent government to take progressive steps to eliminate gender-based violence from society, promote inclusivity and consider women as equal human beings and partners in contributing to society's well-being.

First and foremost, the

government should challenge societal discourses, outmoded social norms and structural suppression to foster cooperative, equal and peaceful relations among people.

Secondly, it should bring about changes in social conditions, including work, play and learning.

Thirdly, it should increase women's political participation and economic opportunities without discrimination and create an environment where women can use their true potential to their benefit without hindrance.

Fourthly, the government and other stakeholders should update syllabi to promote harmony, inclusivity and respectful relations.

Fifthly, there should be initiatives for behavioural changes and parenting, along with social awareness programs in both urban and rural areas so as to promote women's dignity, identity and potential.

Lastly, speedy justice should be served to perpetrators, with severe punishment and an immediate crisis response.

In sum, these initiatives and changing societal attitudes will pave the way for an inclusive, peaceful and prosperous society, positioning Pakistan at a respectable position on the Gender Gap Index. ■

The writer is a researcher and columnist based in Mardan. He can be reached at zakiir9669@gmail.com



In today's society, it is crucial for young people to have positive role models in their lives. Research studies have shown that adolescents with access to positive role models have higher self-esteem, better academic performance and a lower likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours. Unfortunately, in today's Pakistan, many children and adolescents do not have positive role models to look up to.

Who should the youngsters look up to as their role models?

OUR ROLE MODELS CRISIS

Tayyab Hussain Gadhi

Implicitly or explicitly, we have role models - individuals whose behaviour, personality or achievements inspire us, particularly the younger generation, so much that we aspire to emulate them. Having role models is very important, and having good role models is even more important, as they influence what we do and how we turn out eventually. Positive role models influence our actions and motivate us to strive to uncover our true potentials and overcome our weaknesses. Having them pushes us to make the most of our lives. But, in today's Pakistan, it is quite startling that we are so jaded with our lives, and the world in general, that we do not seek inspiration from others; we do not have role models in our country anymore.

What is a role model?

"Role model" is undoubtedly a very useful term that has become part of everyday usage. In the socialization process, we tend to look at others, especially successful people, as role models. Noted sociologist Robert K. Merton is credited with coining the term "role model" in an article in 1949. Merton was an influential sociologist who spent more than 50 years of his academic life at Columbia Univer-

sity. He is also credited with creating terms such as "focus group" and "self-fulfilling prophecy." Had there been a Nobel Prize in sociology, he would surely have been a recipient. In fact, his son, Robert C. Merton, received a Nobel Prize in economics in 1997.

Importance

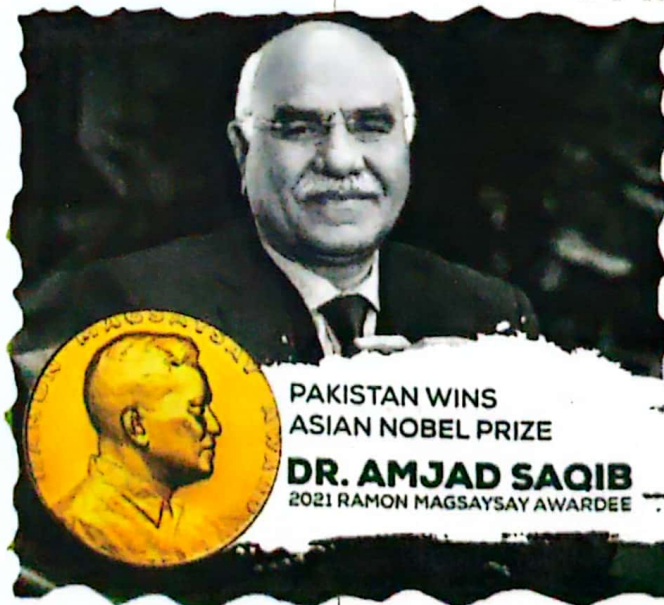
The importance of role models is well-known in the world of diversity, equity and

inclusion. When a successful person shares your race, gender, disability or other diversity trait, you are more likely to be inspired to think: "How can I emulate him/her."

Role models are a must for self-improvement because we must have a standard to strive for or compare ourselves with. There must be a 'greatness' or a 'stardom' (not in terms of showbiz) that we should wish to achieve if we want to have even a mediocre amount

of success in any aspect of life. Therefore, it is important to have the right inspiration to discover who you are and do your best.

Role models play an essential part in shaping our lives, guiding our aspirations and nurturing our growth. Their importance is multi-faceted, deeply influencing both personal development and societal progress.



They offer a blueprint for achieving our goals, showing us that our aspirations are within reach. Role models in literature, politics and various fields of expertise show us the heights that human intellect and perseverance can achieve. Role models exemplify integrity, dedication and compassion, encouraging us to adopt these values in our own lives. They demonstrate how success is not merely a result of ambition but also of ethical conduct and social responsibility.

Some examples

All great leaders, sportsmen and high-achievers have one thing in common — they all have

positive role models whom they strived to emulate in some way and eventually ended up doing better than their role models.

Argentinian player Lionel Messi confessed to having France legend Zinedine Zidane as his role model in football when he was growing up, labelling him a "hero". Now, don't you think Messi has probably outdone Zidane as a footballer?

And since Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg became global icons due to their phenomenal success in the fields of technology and business, many youngsters have joined the tech bandwagon and set up businesses by following their passion or any out-of-the-box idea that came to their heads. Some even became dropouts like Zuckerberg to give full time to their passion — though, it's not a bright idea.

The case of Pakistan

Back in the 1970s, sports was among the most sought-after entertainment and recreation for Pakistani youth. Sports enthusiasts would often gather in huge numbers to watch a cricket match or a hockey tournament, a squash clash or an athletics meet and they embraced sports like nothing else. These enthusiasts got tremendously inspired by watching icons such as Imran Khan, Jahangir Khan, Javed Miandad, Samiullah and many others and instantly related to these larger than life sportspersons as role models and strived to emulate them. Subsequently, from among these fans and these enthusiasts emerged a new generation of iconic players like Wasim Akram, Younis Khan, Waqar Younis, Amir Atlas Khan, Sohail Abbas and several

others who carried the legacy of their idols with aplomb.

But, it seems that role models are scarce these days in Pakistan. Seemingly dashing police officers turn out to be allegedly corrupt and subservient to political leaders instead of the law of the country; successful business magnets earn notoriety for money laundering; seemingly honest public figures, under closer scrutiny, turn out to be men and women of dubious character; sportsmen are mediocres who almost always disappoint the nation, journalists and literati

once idolized for being brave have been exposed badly as everyone knows who would they favour against who. A principal reason for a lack of role models in Pakistan is that here role models somehow are considered a 'demi-god' identity, glorified and considered above all criticism and fault. They tend to unquestionably take over our imagination and their inspirational qualities shroud whatever weaknesses they have.

How to find the right role models

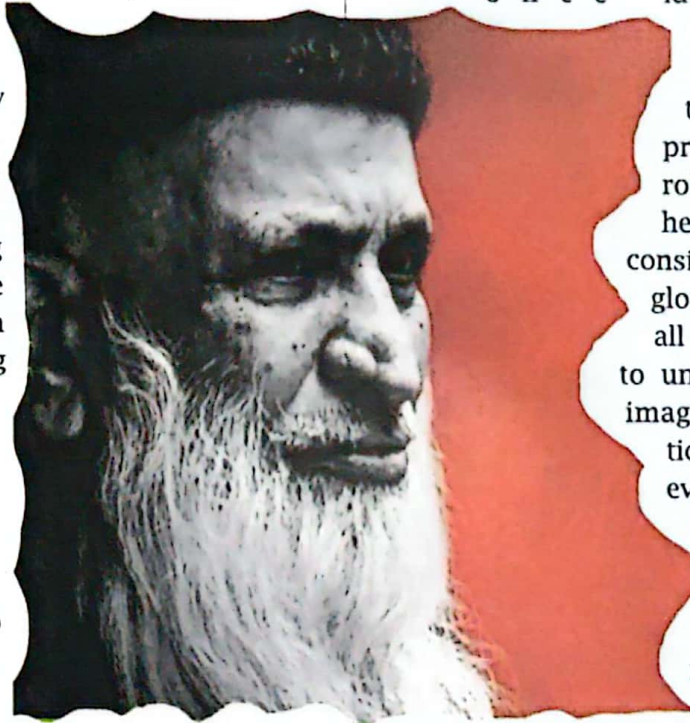
Notwithstanding the above points, our role models can motivate us to overcome challenges because they faced a lot of

challenges and overcame those valiantly. They proved that no obstacle is too big to overcome; in fact, some successful people have had challenges that are generally considered insurmountable. So, to stay motivated or inspired, we should look for someone who inspires us to be the best we can be.

Conclusion

We surely need more role models emerging from our country with a focused vision and determination. We have read about our heroes like Quaid-i-Azam, Allama Iqbal, Sir Syed and many others, but we do not find any true hero in the contemporary society. Adding insult to injury is the fact that many great Pakistanis like Abdul Sattar Edhi, Jahangir Khan, Jansher Khan, Dr. Amjad Saqib, Habib Jalib, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, Malik Meraj Khalid, Dr. Abdus Salam, Arfa Karim, are being obliterated from our national memory and only military men are being eulogized. This trend is dangerous and must be arrested. ■

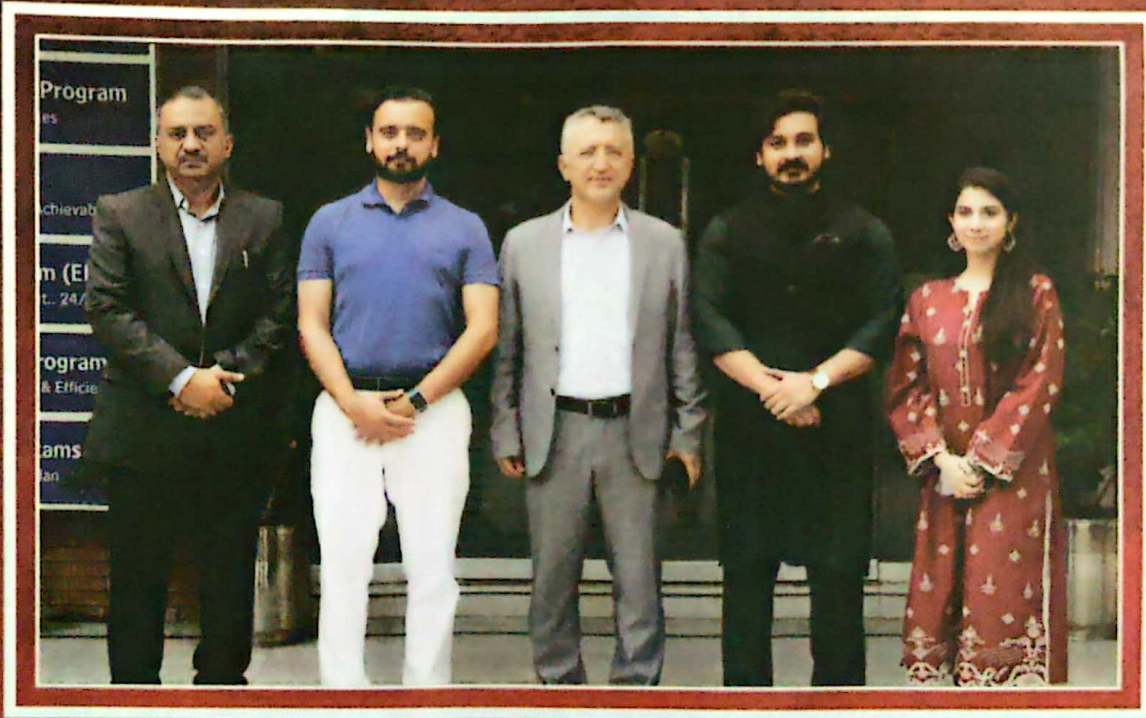
The writer is a CSS aspirant.






WORLD TIMES
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C-STUDY IN TURKEY



It was a pleasure to host

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This book starts with the story of twelve successful people who proved to be the heroes of their lives. This book contains quotes by these successful individuals. It makes the point that everyone is created (by Allah Almighty) to be the hero of his life.

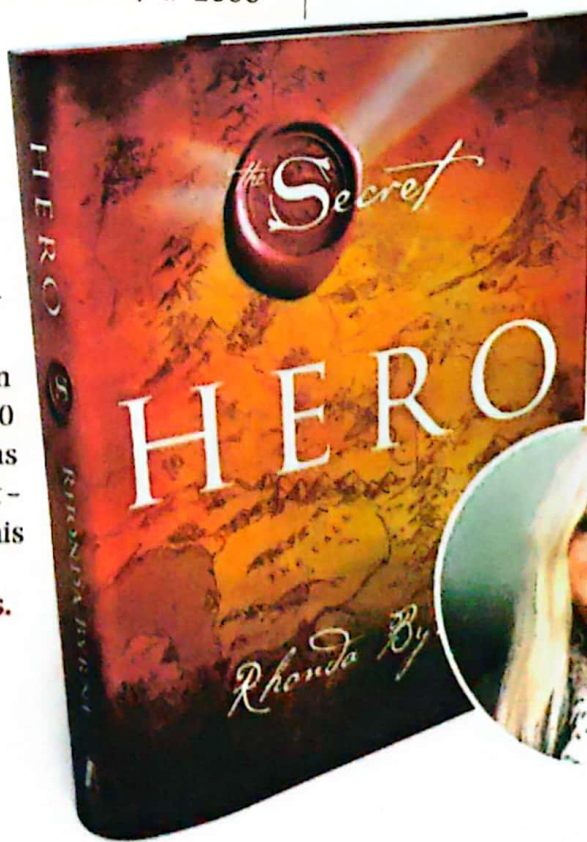
Everyone is special and has unique characteristics and qualities. If you are alive, you have a purpose in life yet to be fulfilled. One should try to find and fulfil that purpose.

About the author: Rhonda Byrne

- The creator behind *The Secret*, a 2006 documentary film that swept the world. (You may watch this documentary on YouTube.)
- This movie changed the lives of millions.
- *The Secret* was published.
- This book has been translated into 50 languages and remains one of the longest-running bestsellers of this century.

Other books authored by Ms. Byrne

- *The Power* (2009)
- *The Magic* (2010)



Muhammad Asim Jasra

- *How the Secret Changed My Life* (2016)
- *The Greatest Secret* (2020)
- *The Secret to Love, Health and Money: A Master Class* (2022)

Contents of the book

This book comprises quotes by twelve successful persons in their respective fields, referred to as 'Heroes'. The key takeaways from the lives of these heroes have been narrated in this book.

Important takeaways

1. Power of Gratitude

The author pays gratitude to all who assisted her in getting this book completed. She has emphasized the power of gratitude in her another book 'The Magic'. She states that one should not be a complaining person and should always stay grateful. Gratitude has a great power. Do not leave your bed without paying gratitude to Allah Almighty for at least 15 minutes in your bed. Always see

the positive side. Hero does not blame anyone. Live the life of a hero. Hero implies the best version of oneself.

2. Everyone has infinite potential

We arbitrarily put limitations on our thoughts and capacity. One should try to tap one's innate potential. It often goes untapped. You may start from zero. No matter where you are now; what matters is where you want to go. You can do it. It is never too late. Be comfortable in taking start from zero.

3. Persistence

Be persistent. If you fall, get up. Never get disappointed by setbacks and failures. Failures are alerts for equivalent opportunities for success. Difficult circumstances would make you strong, and help you realize your dreams. Seeds of success grow in an unfavourable soil of circumstances. The journey towards your dreams would not be on a straight line. It would go into a maze like pattern. Do not fight bad circumstances. Try to find opportunities therein. You will find unanticipated opportunities and ease along the way. When you find a path closed, there will be an alterna-

tive turnaround, leading to the destination.

4. Think and observe

Keep your mind open to new ideas. Work on your own ideas. Do what you love to do. Try to earn a living from what you do. Try to translate your hobbies into your profession. When you are doing what you love to do, work is not boring for you and you do not get tired of doing your tasks. Analyze and be mentally smart. Welcome every opportunity with open arms. Imagine yourself as a successful person in whatever you want to do. Imagine yourself as a hero/champion.

Regulate where you are spending your mental energies. Do not think about the things that you cannot control; only about the things that you can control.

5. Burning desire

Have a burning desire to achieve your dreams. It can do wonders for you. Find the hero inside you. Have big dreams. They will push your limits and awaken the hero inside you.

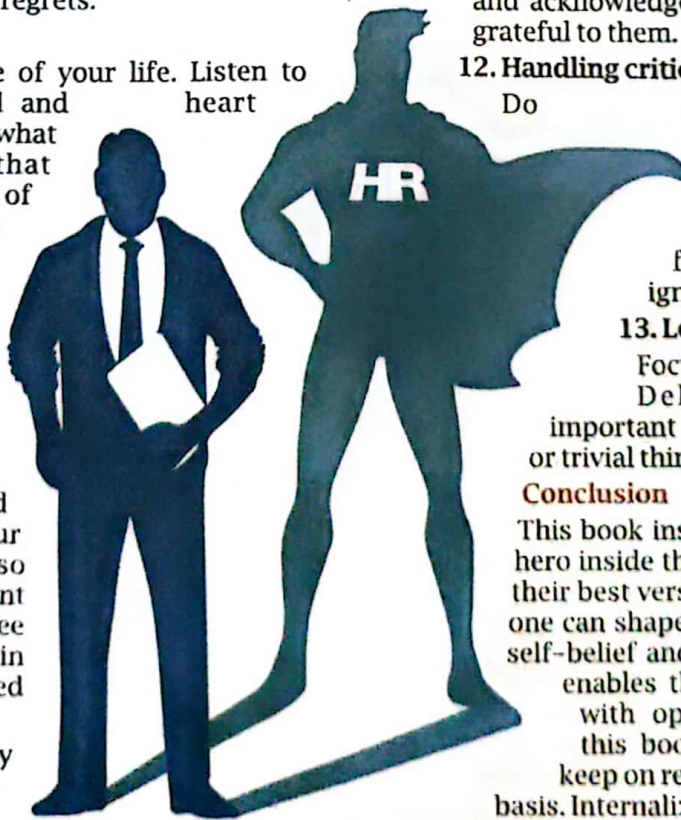
6. Take calculated risks

It is perfectly fine to take risks for your dreams. Sacrificing dreams on the altar of a sense of security is wrong. It is worthless to live without chasing your dreams. Try new things. Do courses. Learn new skills. Try different sports. Do it now. Do not wait for the perfect timing. Live without regrets.

7. Dream profession

Find the purpose/rationale of your life. Listen to yourself. Open your mind and heart to the universe. Find out what others want. Work on that product. The foundation of successful businesses lies in knowing how you can fulfil the needs of others. Find out what you can do in an efficient and effective way. Find out what you want to do. Match both of the findings given above. Write your goals on a white board and hang that white board in your bedroom, or you can also make a similar arrangement to ensure that you often see what you should be doing in life. Keep your mind occupied with your goals all the time.

If you are unable to identify your dream profession, focus on how you can give your best to your current profession. This would pay you back. Give your best to whatever you do. Do not do anything half-heartedly. Follow your happiness. Enjoy every moment. Do not try to make everyone happy. Shift gradually from what you are doing now to what you want to do happily.



8. Positive self-talk

Have belief in your capabilities. Focus on self-talk. It should be inspiring and motivating. Talk to yourself like a winner. Think that everything in the universe would move favourably to support you. Change the programming of your unconscious from negative to positive. Think positive and act accordingly. Think about your dream profession just before sleeping. Have great images about yourself in your mind.

9. Push your physical and mental limits

Try to do difficult things. Push your limits. Be comfortable in being uncomfortable. Experiencing fear and anxiety is natural. Feel the fear and do it anyway. Come out of your comfort zone.

10. Follow your intuition

Act upon the voice of your intuition. Put questions to yourself. This would strengthen your intuition. Try to develop your intuitive capabilities.

11. Be at peace with your surroundings

Respect everyone. Behave courteously. Treat everyone with love and respect. Be generous. Do good deeds to others. Do not be vindictive. Be humble. This is not the case that you will reach your destination without the support of others. Many friends and team members would support you. Value them, remember and acknowledge their contributions and be grateful to them.

12. Handling critics

Do not lose heart as you find critics on your way. They are a part of the success package. Some are to be taken as productive feedback and some to be ignored.

13. Learn the art of delegation

Focus on a few important things. Delegate urgent and less important things. Ignore unimportant or trivial things.

Conclusion

This book inspires readers to awaken the hero inside them, and helps them in being their best versions. It makes the point that one can shape one's life with the power of self-belief and positive mental attitude. It enables the readers to face adversity with optimism and courage. Have this book on your study table and keep on reading its few pages on daily a basis. Internalize its key takeaways.

Best of luck for a happy and successful life ahead! 📖

The writer is a civil servant, belonging to the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP). He can be reached at: asimjasraa@gmail.com

Heirs to Power

Dynastic politics and women

Iqra Riaz Ud Din

Political dynasties have been a long-standing ubiquitous phenomenon in democracies around the world, especially in the South Asian region where these dynasties have been in power since aeons. Men and women belonging to these influential families traditionally hold considerable sway, seemingly commanding entire political parties. The prevalence of dynastic politics has perpetuated an elite class that spans generations, obstructing the entry of capable and meritorious candidates into politics. In the following piece, the writer has thrown light on various aspects of women's prominent role in dynastic politics and how this phenomenon is detrimental to women's participation in politics.

In developing countries, especially those in South Asia, women have played a greater role as heads of government than in any other part of the world. However, this role has primarily been based on dynastic dynamics and familial associations of influential political figures. For example, India's first and, to date, only woman prime minister, Indira Gandhi, who served two terms, i.e. in 1966 and 1980, was a product of dynastic politics as she was the daughter of post-independence India's first premier, Jawaharlal Nehru. Similarly, in Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina Wazed (the incumbent premier) and Begum Khaleda Zia (the first female prime minister of her country) also draw their legitimacy from their familial influences, as the former is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father and first president of Bangladesh, while the latter is the widow of former president of Bangladesh Ziaur Rahman. Likewise, Sirimavo Bandaranaike (the world's first female prime minister) in Sri Lanka assumed office after the assassination of her husband Solomon Bandaranaike (also known as 'The Silver Bell of Asia') who served as the country's prime minister from 1956 to 1959. Later, their daughter, Chandrika Kumaratunga, served as the Sri Lankan president from 1994 to 2005. Moreover, in Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto

was the first and, to date, the only female prime minister who served two terms, i.e. 1988–1990 and 1993–1996. She derived her legacy and charismatic leadership from her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had served as President, Prime Minister and Chief Martial Law Administrator in Pakistan. More recently, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the daughter of former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, has been elected as the Chief Minister of Pakistan's most populous province, i.e. Punjab. Examples of these ladies pose interesting questions: Is women's space in the political arena captured by the political elite? What are the causes of this phenomenon? Does this elite capture hinder gender equality in the political domain? Elite Capture Theory argues that the powerful elite manipulate and manoeuvre the socio-political fabric of society to serve their interests at the expense of broader social welfare. The powerful elite consist of corporate entities, influential interest groups and oligarchic civil-military bureaucracy. Pakistan is such a post-colonial state where the elite class is the "occupier" and the middle and lower-middle classes are "occupied". The elite strictly exercise control over resources and decision-making apparatus to influence policymaking and policy outcomes so as to enhance their agenda. In the context of politics, elite capture theory manifests in political agendas, policymaking and electoral processes. This creates fewer spaces for marginalized classes and groups, such as women belonging to the

VOTE

VOTE



This thing is now translated into a broader horizon where paid social media influencers use propaganda techniques to play with the minds of people, inculcating their orthodox philosophies. For example, the statement given by a self-proclaimed scholar that "95 percent of the women in Pakistan are 'Jahil'" is unethical and has

middle and lower classes and minorities.

Sociocultural barriers

Patriarchal perceptions and practices are the foremost reasons why the elite use such tactics to marginalize women who do not belong in them. First of all, the notion that "men are better equipped than women" is used to discourage the participation of non-elite women in politics. Secondly, in Pakistan, "mullah mentality" is heavily engraved in society, particularly after the unconstitutional rule of military dictator Ziaul Haq. The politicization of religion created a mentality that restricted the participation of women in the socio-political and economic arenas. Women from non-elite classes are regarded as "honour," and in order to safeguard this "honour," women need to remain within the four walls of their houses. This hinders the participation of non-elite women in the political process.

Thirdly, women's participation in politics demands the safety of political processes. Pakistan is an unhealthy democracy where violence in political processes is entrenched to such an extent that families of non-elite women discourage them from taking part in active politics. This violence is used in many ways; for example, Ayub Khan used psychological violence, i.e. harassment, against Fatima Jinnah. He used state resources to hinder her political campaigns and threatened her through his statements. Once he stated, "They call her the Mother of the Nation, then she should at least behave like a mother." Even at Ayub Khan's behest, followers of the Convention Muslim League (CML) tied a white scarf around a bitch's neck along with a lantern (Fatima Jinnah's election symbol) and paraded it in the streets, chanting, "Fatima Jinnah running her campaign". More derogatory instances were evident when Benazir Bhutto entered politics. For example, the elite class, which supported Nawaz Sharif during the 1988 election, dispersed doctored images of Benazir Bhutto and her mother, Nusrat Bhutto, from helicopters all over Pakistan, and PML-N supporters uttered chants like "Coca Cola Pepsi, Benazir Taxi." Such degrading campaigns created a cautious mindset in non-elite families that they must not send their women into politics.

The elite class crafted the political environment in such a way that only patriarchy dominates, and they use their women symbolically to show gender parity.



been used to manipulate the minds of people that only 5 percent of women in Pakistan rightfully deserve all socio-cultural, economic and political rights. Another example is a song that is circulating on social media, spreading hate towards women's education. These are the tactics and strategies of the "mullah-elite" alliance to sabotage the emerging role of non-elite women.

Institutional and economic barriers

The elite class has devised political policies in such a way that even their own women become part of assemblies on the basis of a quota system rather than doing active politics and contesting elections. Hence, politics in Pakistan is a gruesome business and is not intended to serve the interests of the masses. Non-elite women face serious economic challenges to becoming part of the political class.

Firstly, the costs of political campaigns are higher, as in order to run for a political office, one needs substantial and sustainable financial resources that are spent on advertising, organizing rallies and reaching out to the voters.

Secondly, steady finances are often required to maintain a political career. Particularly in senior positions, many political jobs do not offer substantive salaries or benefits. The non-elite women, who might have stable jobs, are discouraged from entering politics because of the financial instability.

Thirdly, in Pakistan, gaining access to political networks and receiving favours are considered essential for furthering one's political career. Party organizations are frequently dominated by well-established political families and elites who limit the prospects available to entrants from middle-class backgrounds. In the absence of strong connections or endorsements from prominent individuals, non-elite women aspirants to politics may encounter difficulties in garnering recognition and backing from their party or constituents. The elite class employs and benefits from these policies. With the use of a quota

system, they perpetuate the idea that only elite-class women get seats in legislative bodies. Moreover, this quota system allows the patriarchy to save their resources because if their women contest elections, then they need to spend resources. The "quota capture of elite women" also affirms the phenomenon that women are somehow not fit for active politics. This became a discouragement for the non-elite women aspiring for political goals.

Lastly, the financial policy and networking policy made by the patriarchal elite asserted and reaffirmed that non-elite women cannot attain such financial stability to be a part of political processes. However, non-elite women, who somehow become 'political workers', are used only in grassroots politics. These workers or grassroots female politicians hardly reach the top positions in political parties. Instead, political parties mostly use feminist hues for political mobilization and street-level activism, i.e. political protests. Based on their socio-economic capital, elite women easily surpass women political workers in acquiring leadership roles. This phenomenon perpetuates the superficial narrative of gender equality, camouflaging the meaningful political participation of grassroots female politicians. The performative deployment of feminist discourse for mobilization purposes, devoid of resultant substantive reforms in leadership diversity, reinforces the entrenched predominance of elite women within political party structures. Notwithstanding claims of advancement and inclusivity, grassroots female politicians persistently confront systemic impediments that inhibit their attainment of parity in leadership echelons. This predicament underscores an imperative for comprehensive institutional reforms within political entities to foster equity in opportunities for non-elite female participation across socio-economic strata.

Why is the political participation of elite women only symbolic in Pakistan?

Political representation of women in Pakistan is often perceived as tokenism that only aims to fulfil gender quotas. This phenomenon hinders women's empowerment in the decision-making process. For example, Hina Rabbani Khar, a member of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), became the Foreign Minister after the elections of 2008 through a reserved seat mechanism. A similar thing happened in the elections of 2018 and

she served as the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in the PDM government. One must not forget that she belongs to the feudal class. What meaningful changes she must have brought to the foreign policy of Pakistan, as foreign matters are in the hands of the military bureaucracy! Similarly, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Minister for Human Rights, Dr. Shireen Mazari, also became a member of the National Assembly on a reserved seat. She is a well-known academician and belongs to the feudal class. What significant changes occurred during her ministerial era? Another example is Syeda Abida Hussain, again a feudal lord, who was a member of PML-N. She served on various ministerial portfolios and also as Pakistan's Ambassador from 1991-1993. She focused more on advancing her political and diplomatic career than making productive changes. All these examples show that the political participation of elite women is only symbolic and does not bring about any constructive changes.

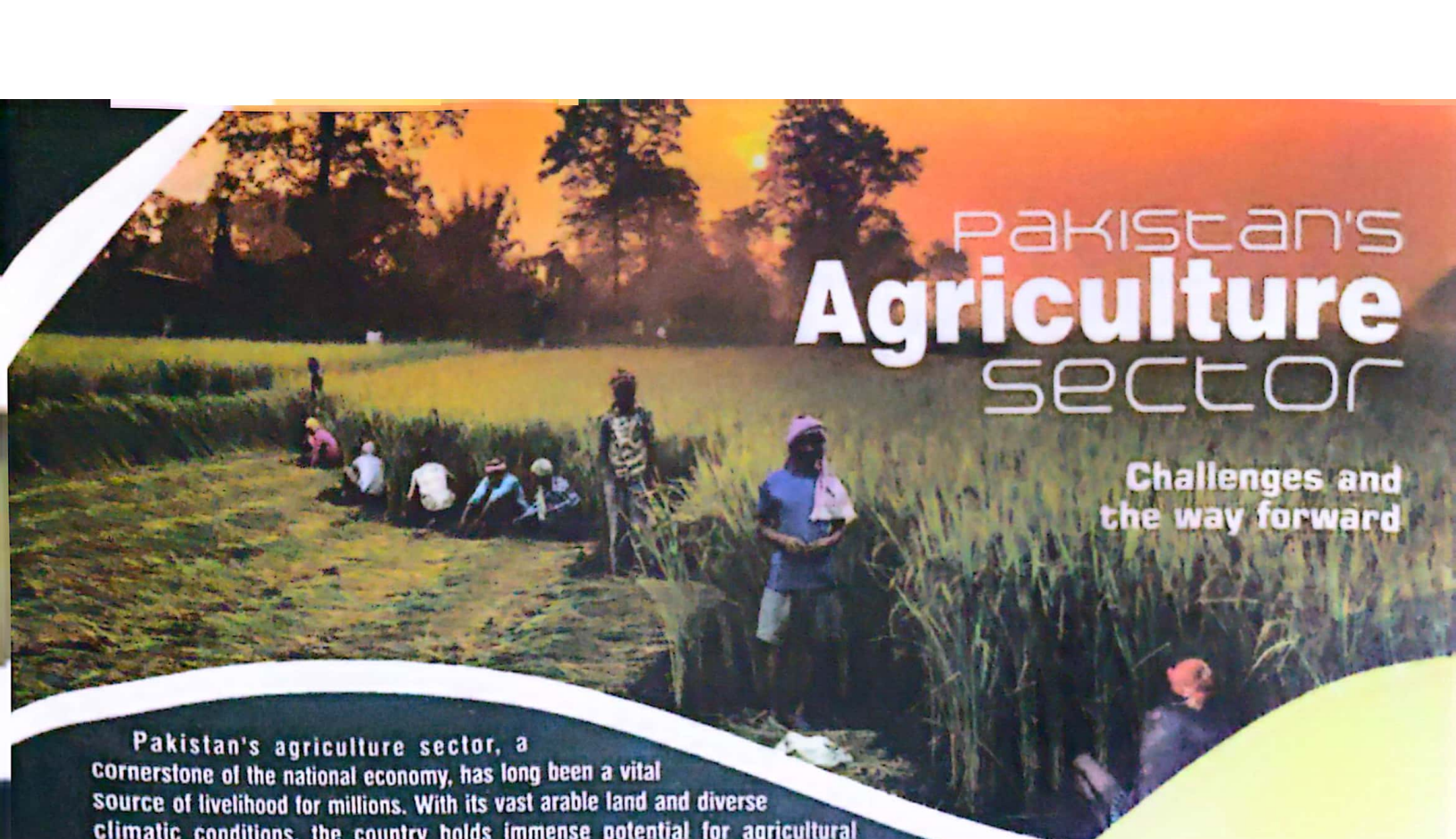
Conclusion

Women's politics in Pakistan is captured by the elite. To succeed in a political arena, a woman needs sustainable financial resources and elite networking connections, which are hardly available to her. However, the fact remains that women coming with people's votes, not from a dynastic background, can bring about dynamic, substantial and productive changes in society. Hence, women who build their political careers on

merit and with grassroots engagements and popular support can bring more constructive changes in society. The women who rise through merit gain credibility and respect that enable them to make independent and progressive decisions. Evidence-based policies and institutional reforms are essential for the promotion of accountability, transparency and gender equality. Contrarily, women with dynastical political careers lack experience and autonomy, and face different constraints, expectations and pressures. The actions of such women are only gauged through their dynastic legacies, nothing more. ■

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Pakistan's Agriculture Sector

Challenges and the way forward

Pakistan's agriculture sector, a cornerstone of the national economy, has long been a vital source of livelihood for millions. With its vast arable land and diverse climatic conditions, the country holds immense potential for agricultural prosperity. However, this sector faces numerous challenges that hinder its growth and sustainability. From outdated farming techniques and water scarcity to the hazardous impacts of climate change and limited access to modern technology, the hurdles are significant. Despite these obstacles, there are also some promising opportunities for transformation and improvement. This article delves into the problems plaguing Pakistan's agriculture sector and explores the prospects that could lead to a more robust and resilient future for this critical sector.

Pakistan's agriculture sector plays a vital role in developing the country's economy. It is the principal hub of employment in the country but, still, this is countered by factors that decrease its potential to flourish.

Shayan Qureshi

Challenges

Some of these hurdles are mentioned below:

One of the most significant potholes in the agriculture sector is the need for more water resources. Even though Pakistan has one of the world's most extensive irrigation systems, we still face extensive challenges in this domain due to malpractices adopted decades ago. Farmers tend to have an over-reliance on canal water, which is considered an old-school method in the global agricultural system; this method is expensive and time-consuming, making it more difficult for the farmers to grow crops and effectively rendering the prices of these crops higher. Furthermore, climate change has also manipulated the rain scenario in Pakistan. Rain in the country is primarily unpredictable; there are times when it does not rain for months, and at some times, floods occur due to extensive monsoons. The timing of rain is also unpredictable, making the farmer unable to rely on rain.

Another letdown in the agriculture industry is that farmers tend to use old-school methods for growing crops; such procedures are labour-intensive but do not produce high yields; methods like vertical farming, aquaponics and hydroponics are yet to be discovered by our local farmers. Due to financial constraints, the farmers' access to tubewells, tractors and finances, which are the foundation of quality farming, is limited, making it hard for them to grow quality crops. Farmers need to be better educated about the science behind growing crops.

The non-availability of adequate infrastructure is also a significant challenge faced by farmers. The lack of paved roads makes travelling much time-consuming. Storage

facilities are also deficient and those available are owned mainly by private landlords. Small-scale farmers cannot afford these high-tech facilities, resulting in a loss of harvest.

Way forward

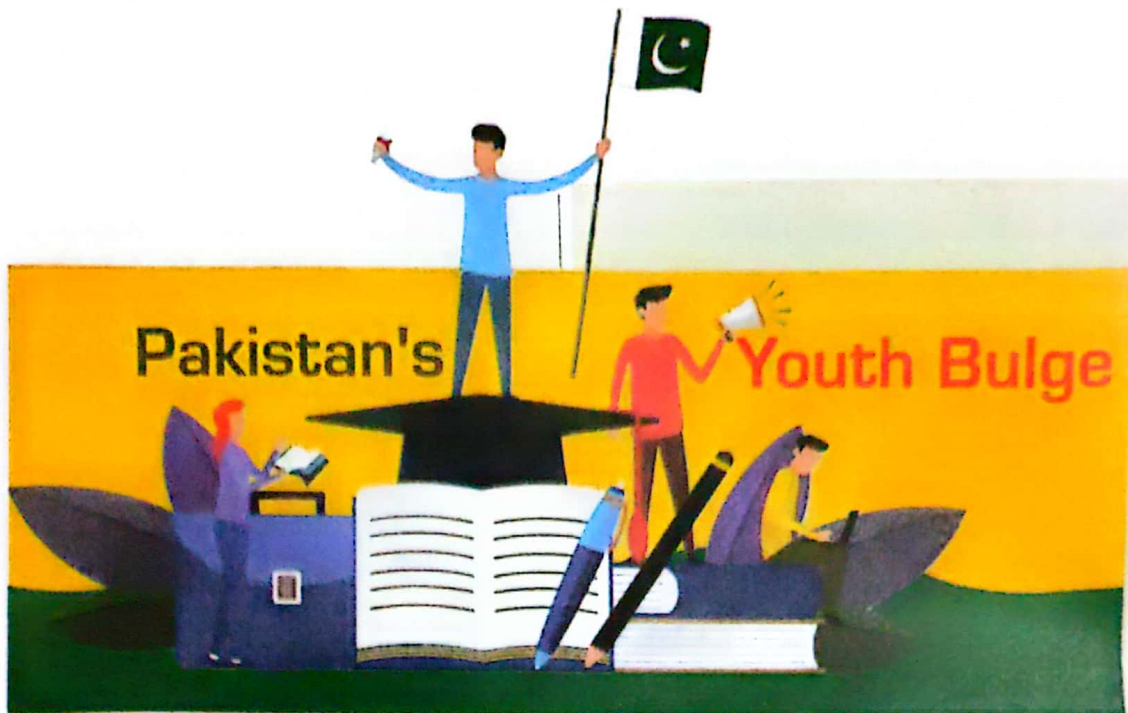
Firstly, farmers should be taught and educated about the latest irrigation techniques, including drip irrigation and sprinkler systems, which produce high yields with less water. The government should work to build new canals for crops like rice that cannot work on low-water systems and need extensive water. New water reservoirs should be built, and the old ones renovated, for the convenience of farmers. The government should facilitate farmers in solarization at sustainable rates, enabling them to install solar tube-well systems for efficient water flow without any disruption.

Modernizing farming techniques is also important. Providing farmers high-yielding seed varieties and modern technology would help them produce much higher yields. The government and the private sector associations should allow the introduction of meaningful strategies for the education of farmers on these new technologies and new structures.

Developing road networks in rural areas is also significant, as it allows efficient transportation of crops from rural to urban areas in a short time. The government should also set prices to such standards that would benefit the farmers and keep them motivated to grow more and more food.

Conclusion

Indeed, the government should understand the importance of the agriculture sector and work for improving its overall state. It will prepare Pakistan to first fulfil its own food-related needs and then export surplus crops that will help the country in earning precious foreign exchange. ■



Youth play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan, as they constitute a significant portion of the population and represent the country's potential for future growth and innovation.

Their energy, élan, creativity and adaptability make them ideal drivers of economic progress, capable of embracing new technologies and entrepreneurial ventures that can boost productivity and create jobs. Investing in education and skills training for young people ensures a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, essential for competing in the global economy. Furthermore, youth engagement in civic activities and leadership roles can lead to more inclusive and dynamic governance, fostering social cohesion and cultural vibrancy. Addressing the challenges faced by Pakistani youth, such as unemployment, lack of access to quality education and social inequalities, is crucial for unlocking their full potential and ensuring sustainable development. By empowering its youth, Pakistan can harness a powerful force for economic resilience, innovation, and social progress.

Pakistan's youth has emerged as a significant demographic asset, especially during the last decade or so. Pakistan now has a population close to 240 million and young people (under the age of 30) make up over 67% of its total population. Even more dramatically, at the time of the latest census, almost 28% of the population was under the age of 10. As a result, Pakistan's youth population is only expected to increase in the years to come.

The demographic composition of Pakistan, often referred to as a "youth bulge," carries both promise

Dr. Hassaan Bin Zubair

and perils for the national economy. The optimistic outlook suggests that the entry of a large number of educated youth into the labour force would lead to a surge in productivity, thereby facilitating faster economic growth. Moreover, a lower dependency ratio, as the working-age population grows, can result in higher national savings and increased investment. This potential demographic dividend, if harnessed effectively, can be a catalyst for Pakistan's economic development. However, there is a crucial caveat to this narrative. The youth bulge's positive impact is contingent upon the strength of the economy to absorb these new entrants into productive jobs. The demographic dividend can turn into a demographic nightmare if there are insufficient job opportunities and a lack of economic stability.

The most profound problem our youth is facing at present is frustration. This monster is eating up our youth slowly and gradually. The youth in Pakistan don't have jobs, means of healthy entertainment, health resources and awareness. This frustration, as a result of a multitude of problems, is increasing day by day.

Education is the most powerful weapon of the youth. With it, they could lead their country towards progress. Unfortunately, quality and skill-based education is still a dream for our youth, especially for the poor. There is no formal guidance for students in the logical selection of a specific course of study. There is no unified education system. Our universities and colleges have become degree-distributing machines. Education does not mean only degrees but it, in its true sense, is the future of the youth.

Another major problem faced by our youth is

unemployment. After completing their education, they find no job to utilize their skills to serve their country. This is the result of the government's inability to utilize youth properly. Deteriorating conditions are also responsible for low investment in the country, resulting in fewer job opportunities. Unemployment is a multi-dimensional and complex issue that starts a vicious circle of associated problems like the involvement of youth in radical politics, bank and household burglaries, social insecurity, lawlessness and the use of drugs.

UNICEF estimates that because of the Covid-19 outbreak, about 40 million children in Pakistan have been forced to go to online education. Those without access to the internet may face difficulties in educational activities. There was already a large population of young people who lacked the basic, transferable, digital, job-specific and entrepreneurial skills necessary to succeed in the modern economy before the epidemic hit.

Pakistan has several serious health problems, especially among young people. Among these worries, malnutrition stands out as an especially serious problem, as seen by the shocking fact that almost 40% of children under the age of five have stunted development as a result of chronic malnourishment. The country's kids are stuck in a vicious cycle of disadvantage because pervasive malnutrition stunts both their physical and mental development. The youth of Pakistan are facing severe troubles with medical treatments and are exacerbating the situation. Fortunately, people living in urban areas have access to adequate healthcare, contrary to those living in rural areas. Such health issues increase in severe conditions, which affect human therapies as they grow. The health problems are worsening and complicated by the presence of infectious illnesses. Shortage of clean water, inadequate sanitation and, above all, a lack of health knowledge are a few factors

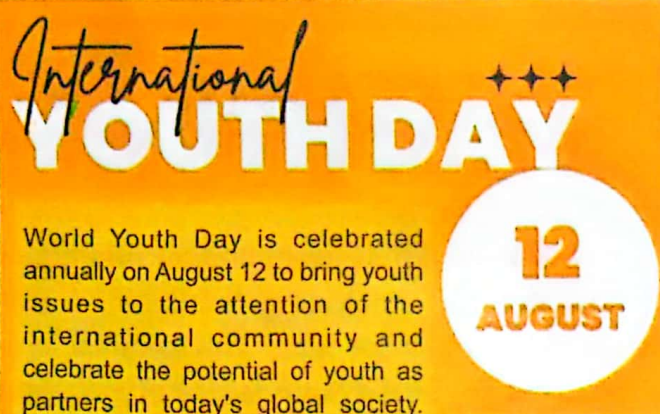
that affect youth health and cause long-term issues that prevent people from completing their schooling at earlier ages. Switzerland provides an exemplary model for Pakistan to consider. It is a global leader in vocational education and training (VET), characterized by its on-job training and close collaboration between vocational training institutions and industry. This "gold standard" VET system has not only equipped individuals with practical skills but has also created a seamless transition from education to employment. To replicate this success, Pakistan must strengthen the links between technical training institutions and industry players. Collaboration can enrich the curriculum, making it more relevant to the job market. Additionally, it ensures that what students learn in the classroom aligns with industry practices, reducing youth underemployment. By providing young people with competitive skills for self-employment or construction jobs, vocational training can become an appealing choice for the youth while addressing the job market's skill shortages. Pakistan faces a multifaceted economic challenge characterized by soaring inflation, mass emigration, and a burgeoning youth population. However, these challenges also present opportunities for growth and development, if managed effectively. A "skills-first" approach through vocational education and training, as exemplified by Switzerland, holds the key to harnessing the potential of our young population. By investing in our youth's skills and employability, we can secure our economic stability and prosperity, ensuring that Pakistan's demographic dividend becomes a catalyst for positive change. It is, therefore, recommended that the government of Pakistan should adopt a mechanism to put them in the right direction, otherwise, it has been quoted by Allen Ginsberg that, "I have seen the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked." Let's think for them. ▢

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World Youth Day is celebrated annually on August 12 to bring youth issues to the attention of the international community and celebrate the potential of youth as partners in today's global society. The Day gives an opportunity to celebrate and mainstream young peoples' voices, actions and initiatives, as well as their meaningful, universal and equitable engagement. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) established the Day on 17 December 1999, after it endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth calling for 12th of August to be declared International Youth Day.

FEMINIST APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The discipline of international relations has been a science for almost a century and has undergone considerable development and dynamism as a field of knowledge. In the aftermath of the First World War, traditional idealistic trends prevailed. Still, after the end of the Second World War, the theory of realism dominated the analysis of international relations, international politics and its laws and mechanisms. With the inter-paradigm debate of the 1980s, a broad spectrum of theories of international relations (IR) emerged, the most significant of which are critical theories, including feminism, a perspective that sees the international arena through primarily a gender lens. The feminist approach to IR is a critical perspective that seeks to address the gendered dimensions of global politics. The instant article attempts to explore whether feminist theory has been able to provide a model for the analysis and interpretation of global phenomena, allowing it to occupy a place among IR theories.



In the wake of World War II, the changing global order witnessed the rise of non-state actors, ethnic tensions and the Cold War. This necessitated alternative approaches to international relations (IR), including the feminist perspective that views the international arena through a gendered lens.

Background

After WW II, the global order was undergoing various shifts that could not be explained by traditional theories of inter-state war and conflict. The rise of violent trans-state actors and groups, ethnic conflicts and tensions, and the relatively peaceful ending of the Cold War were markers of a changing global arena where the state was not just the only player. This called for different and varied approaches to looking at international relations, not just as an order of states and relations among them but also as one where multiple actors and institutions factor in. The feminist approach to IR is one such perspective.

What is Feminism?

Feminism is basically a movement and ideological position that aims to define, establish and achieve the political, economic, personal and social equality of the

sexes. It is about achieving equal rights for both men and women with no intended biased advantages to women. Society believes that women and men are different. Feminism seeks to investigate stereotypes and biases based on genders and believes these are created and perpetuated by patriarchal system. Feminism says this inequality is not due to their biological or sex-based differences but rather to the to the conceptual category of 'gender'. Millions of people manifestly or covertly believe the idea that there should not be equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women. Feminism does not depend upon mercy or realization of male conscience for acceptance of equality for both genders.

Origin of feminist perspective in IR Positivists and Post-Positivists

The feminist perspective in IR emerged from the "Third Debate" between positivists and post-positivist scholars in the 1980s.

Positivists believed that IR is a value-neutral field with definitions and structures such as anarchy and nation-state are fixed.

Post-positivists challenged this view and called for critical analysis, pluralism, and diversity in IR (which

till then was dominated by realist and liberal perspectives).

Realists believe the international arena is in a state of anarchy (there is no overarching sovereign power to govern nation-states and tell them what to do). Therefore, states are constantly involved in 'power politics', trying to safeguard their own interests and security.

Liberal scholars, on the other hand, prioritize cooperation. While they agree on the premise of the global order being anarchic, they contend that instead of power, nation-states actively seek alliances in order to safeguard their interests.

Feminists

Feminists challenged the masculine assumption of human nature inherent in these perspectives, arguing that it neglected social reproduction and development as integral aspects of human nature. They view the global order as a socially constructed hierarchy that perpetuates gender subordination.

Feminists criticize the marginalization of women's experiences in war, conflict and diplomacy. They argued that women's voices, knowledge, perspectives and experiences were often overlooked or subsumed under a male-centric "universal" experience.

How different feminist theories contribute to the understanding of existing challenges in IR

Liberal Feminist

While liberal feminist theory does not fundamentally challenge the traditional ideas of IR, it questions the content. Liberal feminists look on the role of the gender gap in global politics and the disproportionate effects of war on women in the form of sexual violence and trafficking. They call for more female participation in high-level politics and contend that the presence of more women leaders would facilitate peaceful and humanitarian policies.

Constructivist Feminist

Constructivist feminist theory looks at how gendered identities play a role in global politics. It looks at gender as the core component which influences structures and personal relationships. It places emphasis on the idea of gender and how it upholds unequal global material conditions. While liberal feminism focuses on achieving formal equality and individual rights for women within existing structures, constructivist feminism examines how gender is socially constructed and seeks to transform societal norms and power relations for true equality.



Feminist Post-Structuralist

A feminist post-structuralist approach talks about binary linguistic oppositions in IR like order/anarchy, developed/underdeveloped, national/international etc, which perpetuate and seek to empower the masculine over the feminine. They are highly critical of the assertion that more women in high-level diplomatic positions would lead to pacifist policies as it seeks to further essentialise and reinforce certain characteristics as feminine.

Postcolonial Feminist

It seeks to challenge the assumption of the universality of women's experiences across regions and cultures. It is especially critical of liberal feminists' approach to looking at women in the Global South as powerless, lacking agency, helpless or as one homogenous category.

Feminist today

Gender Inequality

The feminist approach highlights the need to address gender disparities and challenges traditional power structures that perpetuate inequality. It sheds light on how gender shapes global politics, including issues related to security, development and human rights.

Peace and Security

Feminist scholars and activists have challenged traditional notions of security and broadened the concept to include human security, which encompasses the well-being and rights of individuals and communities. They have highlighted the disproportionate impact of conflicts on women, advocated for women's inclusion in peace processes, and emphasized the importance of addressing gender-based violence as a security issue.

Transnational Feminism

The feminist approach to IR recognizes the importance of transnational feminist networks and movements. It acknowledges the interconnectedness of women's struggles globally and the need for collective action to address common challenges.

It highlights the significance of cross-border solidarity and cooperation in promoting gender equality and social justice.

Conclusion

While feminist IR theories have gained traction, they still remain marginal within the discipline. With environmental policies and non-state actors playing an even bigger role for the global arena, feminist theories have much potential in analysing and offering real world solutions. ■

Historical revisionism, the process of re-examining and re-interpreting established historical narratives based on new evidence, methodologies or theoretical perspectives, fosters a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the past. This process, which aims to refine and sometimes challenge traditional accounts, can lead to a deeper understanding of history, but it can also be controversial, especially when it intersects with national identities, cultural memories or political agendas. Historical revisionism underscores the dynamic nature of history, emphasizing that our understanding of the past is continually evolving.

Amna Hashmi



Historical revisionism is the process of altering the meanings of past events, sometimes for the purpose of questioning the dominant paradigm. It is a practice that holds much influence in determining national narratives, swaying public opinion and affecting even diplomacy. People often manipulate history to suit today's political agenda; therefore, there is always controversy surrounding history. It is crucial to comprehend the nature and processes underlying historical revisionism in order to assess its consequences for inter- and intra-societal relationships.

In fact, the word "revisionist" became fashionable at the end of the 19th century as an insult used by Lenin (1870–1924), when calling the socialist reformer Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932) a traitor. He had distanced himself from the master Karl Marx (1818–1883) by considering changing Marxist theory in the light of the latest tendencies in Western capitalist society, and thus theorizing about the usefulness of the reformist path over the revolutionary, whose high point came after 1917. On the other hand, today, we take to be revisionist all the interpretations that, whether coming from university chairs or cultural pundits, try to dismantle the "truths," at times mythologized, of traditional historiography.

Japan's revisionist views on World War II

One of the most well-known cases of historical revisionism can be seen in the Japanese perception of their own history during the Second World War. Some political parties and educational system in Japan have endeavoured to deny or reinterpret certain war crimes like the Nanjing Massacre and the Comfort Women issue. This revisionism has had a negative impact on Japan's relations with its neighbouring countries, such as China and South Korea, which call for an apology and recognition of the wrongs committed. The question of remembering the war remains a contentious aspect of the current and future relations in East

"He who controls the present, controls the past. He who controls the past, controls the future."
— George Orwell

THE POLITICS OF
MEMORY AND

HISTORICAL REVISIONISM

Asia, contributing to the existing diplomatic tensions and defining the national memories in the region.

Turkiye's denial of the Armenian Genocide

Some more recent examples of historical revisionism include Turkiye's refusal to accept the Armenian Genocide, the extermination of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. The Turkish authorities have been denying the genocide, and they refer to the events as the turmoil of the war. This position has significant geopolitical implications for Turkiye and its neighbours, especially Armenia and some other Western countries that have formally recognized the genocide. The denial also impacts Turkiye's EU membership bid, which is another consequence since recognition of the genocide is considered a necessary step towards EU membership.

The United States and its colonial past

In the United States, historical revisionism can be seen through the portrayal of colonial history and the relations with native people. Historical accounts and school textbooks have portrayed colonialists as heroes while erasing the Indigenous people's sufferings. This is part of identity politics, which is the ongoing debate on how Americans should perceive their history, ergo their identity. Recent discussions on the complete eradication of the Confederate symbols and the introduction of Indigenous Peoples' Day are examples of some attempts to come to terms with this painful history.

Drivers of Historical Revisionism

Historical revisionism is driven by several key factors that contribute to the re-examination and reinterpretation of established historical narratives. These drivers include:

a. Political ideology and nationalism

Political ideology and nationalism are the main causes of historical revisionism. Historical events are often manipulated by governments and political movements to justify their power and strengthen the people's identity. Thus, they can contribute to the creation of social memory that is beneficial for the achievement of specific political goals by presenting selected historical examples. This is evident in how nationalist leaders all over the world, e.g. Russia's Putin, China's Xi and others, have gone in history to look for events to justify patriotism in the present or policies in the present.

b. Identity politics and group memory

People of different cultures or groups tend to try to tell their side of the story to be acknowledged or compensated for the harm that they have faced. This can result in two or more histories being written about the same event, such as the American Civil War or colonialism in the European colonies. The attempt to manage history is a reflection of the social conflict over the past, identity and belonging.

c. Geopolitical interests and conflict

Governments may manipulate the past in order to strengthen their position in conducting international relations, or to provide a pretext for a war or an invasion. For instance, the Russian narrative of the Second World War is dominated by the narratives of heroism and liberation, while the narratives of the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe are suppressed. This narrative aligns with modern Russian foreign policy and the attempts to regain control over the post-Soviet countries.

Consequences of Historical Revisionism

Historical revisionism can have profound consequences for both academic scholarship and society. Academically, it enriches the field of history by incorporating new evidence and perspectives, leading to more comprehensive and accurate narratives. This can result in the re-evaluation of historical events, figures and eras, fostering a deeper understanding of the past. Socially, historical revisionism can influence national identities and collective memories, often leading to greater recognition of marginalized groups and previously overlooked contributions. However, it can also provoke controversy and debate, particularly when revisions challenge established national myths

or cultural beliefs. In some cases, revisionism can be misused to distort history for political or ideological purposes, highlighting the need for rigorous standards and ethical considerations in historical research.

a. Distortion of historical facts and truth

The most common impact of historical revisionism is that it alters facts and the truth in history. This means that when governments or groups write history for their own gain, there tends to be a lot of dissemination of wrong information. This not only compromises the value of education but also distorts the process of building upon past experience in order to prevent similar misdeeds in the future.

b. Impact on international relations and diplomacy

The manipulation of history can be detrimental to the diplomatic relations of countries in the global community. When nations try to rewrite history, it results in diplomatic tensions, such as Japan's tensions with its neighbours or Türkiye's frayed relations with Armenia. These previous conflicts frequently influence modern international relations and can keep animosity and suspicion between the countries for a long time.

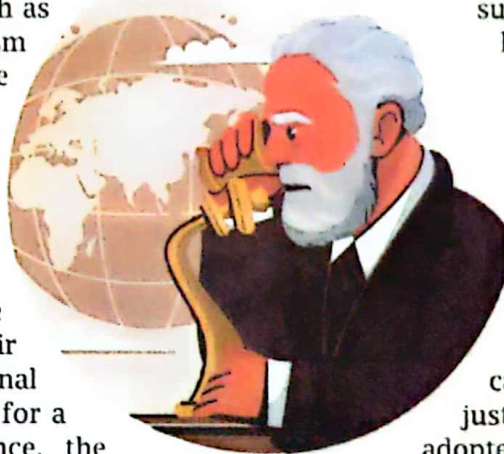
c. Effects on marginalized communities

Since it deals with rewriting history, revisionism can lead to the continued denial of injustices that were committed, consequently perpetuating injustices to groups of people. Societies that have been victims of past injustices can fight for their rights and seek justice; when revisionist histories are adopted, they can further be excluded and erased from history.

Conclusion

The politics of memory and historical revisionism show that history, identity and power are intertwined in many ways. History and memory are crucial in the study and redress of historical injustices. History, especially when it is presented with a focus on both sides and the desire to find the truth, is a way to reconcile and create a more tolerant society. As nations grapple with their pasts, the pursuit of an honest and comprehensive historical narrative remains crucial for fostering mutual understanding and peace in the global community. ■

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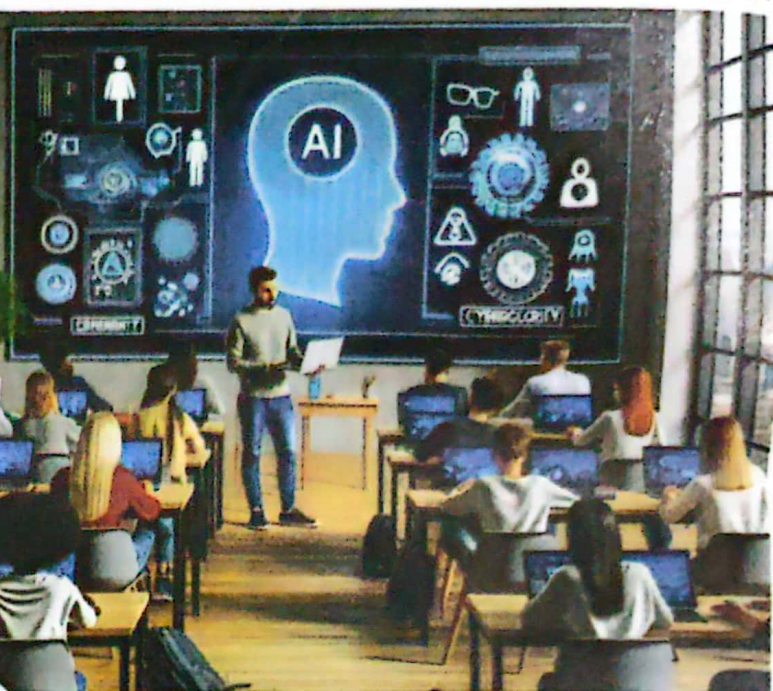
Artificial intelligence has become an integral part of modern life. This path-breaking technological advancement is increasingly influencing everything around us; from the way we interact with technology to how businesses operate and solve problems. So, owing to its widespread impact on daily life, economic growth, technological innovation and its potential to solve complex problems, learning about AI has become no less than essential. Doing so is crucial for several reasons, all of which underscore AI's growing importance in our lives and its potential to shape the future.

Why
Learn
about



It is often, and rightly, said that education is to know everything about something while also knowing something about everything. It means, a doctor should know everything about medicine, but he need not understand how architecture works. However, a well-educated doctor knows something about architecture. This has never been truer in the times we are living in today.

Today, we live in an era characterized by the digital revolution, where new ideas are being developed every minute. It is, therefore, in our interest and poise for progress and development that we keep abreast of the latest developments lest we become the illiterates of the 21st century. One area wherein we must endeavour to stay literate is artificial intelligence (AI). AI has, undoubtedly, become an integral part of our daily lives, often in ways we may not even realize. From voice assistants like Siri and



Alexa to recommendation systems on Netflix and Amazon, AI is everywhere. It is in our smartphones, at our workplaces and even in our homes. AI is shaping industries, driving innovation and transforming how we interact with the world. Learning about AI allows us to navigate these technologies more effectively and make better use of them, enhancing our personal and professional lives.

Although we cannot know everything about AI because not all of us are IT enthusiasts, yet as active AI users, it is necessary, rather imperative, that we know something about AI. Seeking AI literacy, which refers to the understanding of AI concepts, capabilities and implications, will enable us to navigate, utilize and critically evaluate AI technologies. It doesn't mean that everyone should be an AI specialist; rather, the aim is to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to understand, use and interact with AI responsibly and effectively. As AI systems become more integrated into everyday applications, it is essential for empowering individuals to make informed decisions. AI literacy enables people to distinguish between beneficial applications and those that may pose risks to privacy, security or ethical standards.

Consequently, AI literacy is all about viewing emerging technologies critically, understanding their context and questioning their design and implementation. It is also about being able to discern AI's benefits and challenges while making informed decisions about its use. When we talk about AI literacy, it doesn't mean learning how to write complex algorithms or codes. Instead, it means understanding what these algorithms can do and how they are embedded into our lives.

If we take a look at the world around us, we find that AI literacy is becoming a crucial skill in the workforce. As this ground-breaking technology transforms job roles and industries, having a foundational understanding of AI can improve our chances of employability and career advancement. We can benefit from AI literacy by learning how to work alongside AI systems, improve efficiency and innovate within their roles. This literacy helps in adapting to new job requirements and remaining competitive in an ever-evolving job market.

Furthermore, AI literacy is also essential to promote responsible use of technologies related to it. As AI systems can perpetuate biases, invade privacy and influence decisions, understanding these potential pitfalls is critical. AI literacy helps us advocate for transparency, accountability and fairness in AI development and deployment. It fosters a society where ethical considerations are prioritized, and where individuals can hold developers and organizations accountable for their AI practices. By teaching students about AI from a young age, we can prepare them for a future characterized by the omnipresence of AI. By becoming AI-literate, students will be better able and more equipped to participate in discussions about AI policy and governance, shaping a future that reflects their



values and interests.

On a societal level, AI literacy is crucial for ensuring inclusive and equitable access to AI benefits. Without a basic understanding of AI, certain populations may be left behind, exacerbating digital divides and economic disparities. AI literacy initiatives can help bridge these gaps, providing all individuals with the tools to

understand and leverage AI technologies for personal and community development.

In personal life, AI literacy can enhance quality of life by helping individuals utilize AI tools effectively. From health monitoring apps to smart home devices, understanding how these technologies work and their potential benefits and limitations allows individuals to make choices that improve their well-being and convenience.

Notwithstanding its numerous benefits, it is necessary to understand the possible ill effects of AI that are seeping into our lives so as to be responsible for how much we let this affect us.

Tech companies need to sensitise users on AI literacy in several broad areas. The first is the practical understanding of AI. This aspect involves helping users to know how to interact effectively with AI systems and understand their practical applications. It is about enabling users to use AI tools effectively, whether it is using a voice-activated virtual assistant, interacting with an AI-powered customer service bot, or using AI-powered analytics tools in a business context.

The other area in which users need to be sensitised regarding AI is understanding its ethical implications. AI is not just a technical tool but a technology with profound societal implications. A moral understanding of AI involves recognizing these implications and understanding the ethical considerations they raise.

This includes understanding how biases can be embedded in AI systems and how these can perpetuate discriminatory practices. Such an understanding can help users avoid the many pitfalls that come with AI like identity theft or fake news.

In today's world, where AI is a part of our lives and is expected to be even more deeply integrated into everything we do, it is of the utmost importance to understand what lies inside the black box. Otherwise, it will continue to overwhelm us, scare us, and make us more anxious.

In conclusion, it can be said that AI literacy is a vital skill in the modern world, empowering individuals to make informed decisions, enhance career prospects, advocate for ethical AI practices, and engage in meaningful societal discussions. It promotes inclusivity, prepares future generations, and supports informed policy-making, ensuring that the benefits of AI are accessible and equitable. As AI continues to evolve and shape our world, fostering AI literacy is essential for navigating its complexities and harnessing its potential for the greater good. ■

The writer is a student at the University of Narowal.

Too Much Democracy
is

Detrimental to Development

There is never a democracy that
did not commit suicide.
– John Adams

Even though modern humans first emerged on the planet 200,000 years ago, they emerged prominently only 13,000 years ago, after the agricultural revolution in the Neolithic era. This transformed humanity from lonely hunters' gathering groups into fully operative social hierarchies with a concept of morality, survival instincts, a notion of power and the need to establish social structures. Sure, we were at the zenith of intelligence and brainpower and possessed rewarding evolutionary traits, but what about the dominant part of our history where we roamed the planet just to satisfy our needs like the rest of the 8.7 million species on the planet? The real reason for our triumph was the revelation that social cohesion and collective efforts were crucial for our survival. For this reason, we formed tribes and clans to support each other and grow collectively. It was at this moment that democracy was born.

Despite what it has become today – a governmental and political system with a complex framework of supporting institutions and bodies – the initial concept was pretty simple. The village elders or tribal leaders, representing their factions, would gather around a fire and converse, and in the case of a disagreement, voting would take place. To these humans, it was perhaps the most "natural" political system. The credit for the most

Taha Husnain Shah

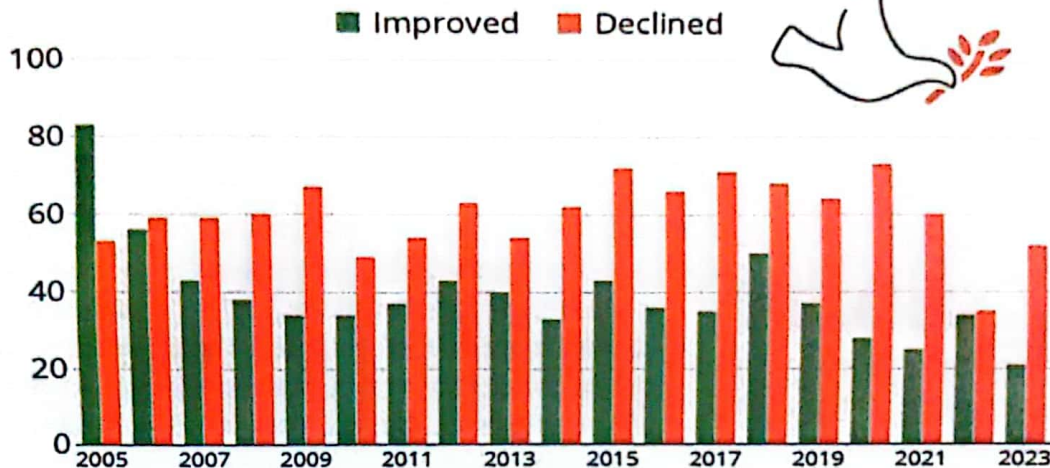
primitive yet distinct blueprint of democracy is given to 5th-century Greece, which was, then, a collection of several hundred city-states.

The citizens of Athens, under the leadership of Cleisthenes, founded what they called the *dēmokratia*. The above-18 citizens of Athens constituted the *dēmos*, who had a say in the political affairs of the city-state. Their governmental heart was the Assembly (*Ecclesia*), which met weekly and took



Worldwide Decline of Freedom Outweighs Improvements

Number of countries where political rights/civil liberties declined or improved per year



195 countries and 15 territories rated for access to political rights and civil liberties
Source: Freedom House



reduces the hazards of injustice, oppression and tyranny by autocratic rulers since the public gets to pick who gets the office. Democratic regimes promote a decentralized market and a capitalist economy. This laissez-faire market has pushed the world towards a more global economy, giving everyone an equal opportunity to thrive and excel. Living standards and the accord of human rights in terms of health, education and the provision of justice also excel

decisions by vote. Its agenda was set by the Council of Five Hundred, which included representatives from territorial entities set up by Cleisthenes. The popular courts, comprising experienced jurors from the public, were also a vital entity. The Romans developed a much more complex approach, which they called a republica. They used an extremely powerful Senate with four voting vessels called comitia or concilium. In these assemblies, votes were counted by units (tribes or factions). They were under the Senate, which was appointed indirectly from the exclusive patrician and monarch families.

Today, democracy is the cornerstone of governance, and the number of countries boasting representative democracy has significantly grown. Our World in Data indicates that the world has become much more democratic in the last two centuries, and now billions of people have democratic rights. A primary explanation for this is the failure of other non-democratic systems, especially after the victory of the Allies in WWI, after which primitive systems like monarchy, aristocracy and oligarchies were discredited. That is not the only reason, surely, as democracy itself holds vast promises of prosperity, a high standard of living and economic integration, and for the most part, it has delivered quite a lot in the post-Industrial Revolution world.

Democracy promotes equality, by giving equal voting and decision-making rights to marginalized groups. It

under democratic regimes, whereas in non-democratic nations, even the notion of fundamental human rights is ambiguous. It builds itself on a number of core principles, which include equality, human rights and inclusion.

By its very definition, democracy allows the general public to participate in and contribute to the political decision-making and policy-formulation processes. In both direct and representative democracies, only the *dēmos* get to decide the agenda and the priorities of the government. This means the citizenry not only shows up to the polling booths but also actively collaborates in public debates, referendums and other such activities. As the former Indian minister for law and justice, Dr. BR Ambedkar, said, "Democracy is not merely a form of government. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen." For the participation of the general public, equality and fair treatment for all citizens are essential; they should not be discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, faith or gender. This means minorities are respected and politically tolerated, and they are fully granted the right to advocate for their viewpoints. In fact, democracy thrives on the openness and richness of ideas, characterized by access to information and a lack of press suppression.

Democracy also safeguards the right to information, signifying that public authorities are obliged to



provide data and insight upon public request. This knowledge is used by journalists to analyse critical situations, enables businesses to grasp market dynamics, and most importantly, allows citizens to make informed political decisions. They are aware of the success or failure of governmental policies, the use of public money, and the agenda of their representatives. They are at liberty to discuss debate and openly support or oppose any political mandate.

Since politicians are representatives of the people and carry their mandate, they are accountable to the public and must act consistent with their will. The people have the ability to sanction the government, which acts against general interests. They might not re-elect them or only choose the representatives who act in their best interests. They can use a legal framework to convict the politician(s) of wrongdoing. For this, the independent courts operating under the national constitution are essential. In an acting democracy, the rule of law prevails, the judiciary is free from any political burden, and the laws are supreme and equal for everyone. It means that laws are enforced consistently and efficiently and that all democratic processes are respected and administered.

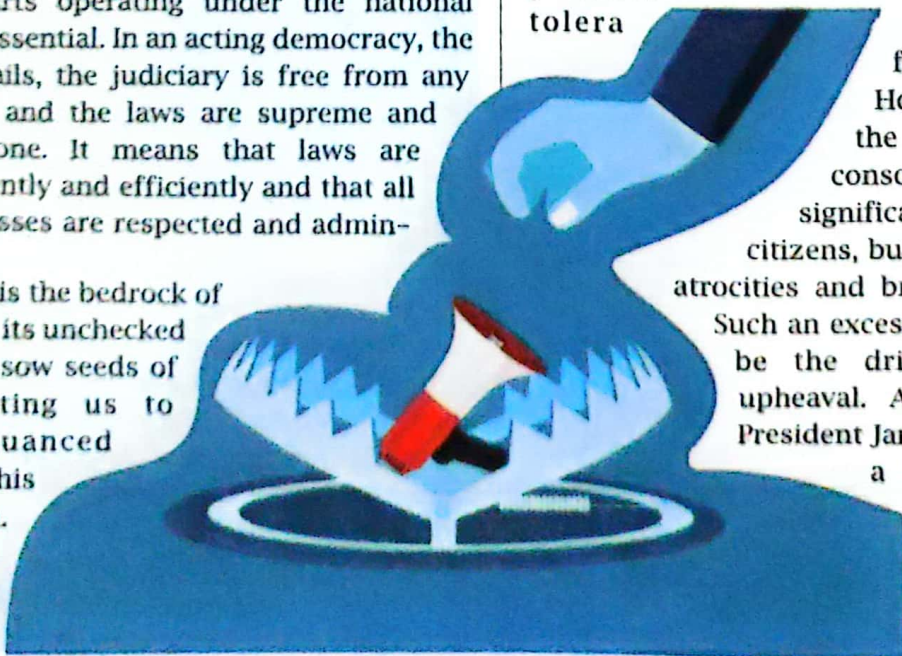
While democracy is the bedrock of societal progress, its unchecked proliferation can sow seeds of demise, prompting us to explore the nuanced limitations of this idealistic notion. In fact, since the turn of the 21st century, democ-

racy has been retreating, as aptly described by Larry Diamond in his book "Democracy in Decline" as a "democratic recession." Which has been characterized by a decrease in voter turnout, the rise of populist politics, the incompetence of the elected governments to fulfil their duties, the intensification of the support of extremist leaders and parties, and the regression of democratic principles? This compels us to investigate the impotence of democracy, which was portrayed by Alexandra Mork, the former winner of an international student essay contest, as "The Best We've Got."

Firstly, the primal entity for relevance in a democracy is the majority, not necessarily the whole community. Even within assemblies, any bill or law is passed only when it is approved by the majority of representatives. History has exhibited countless times that the will of the majority may not be the most ethical or moral stance to pursue. Our glorious yet ghastly history is characterized by cases of severe injustice like slavery, racism, mass genocide, and holocausts, and all of them incorporated some sort of encouragement from the public, which served as the fuel for such gross actions. If someone votes against the majority, regardless of how reasonable or prudent its ideology is, it holds no significance.

The notions and perspectives of the people are not absolute; they change with circumstances, time, and experiences. The majority can also have extremist and violent ideologies, leading them to justify an otherwise inhumane action. One such instance is the Weimar Republic's experiment with democracy; it had a constitutional bedrock and a democratic structure but still ended up spiralling into economic turmoil, political instability, a lack of tolerance for minorities, and finally justifying the Holocaust. The mandate of the Nazi Party was, in fact, consoled and advocated by a significant portion of the German citizens, but this does not justify the atrocities and brutalities they promoted.

Such an excess of democracy can often be the driving factor for social upheaval. As the fourth American President James Madison said, "Where a majority is united by a common sentiment and has an opportunity, the rights of the minor party become inse-





cure.”

The biggest presupposition of democracy, essential for its triumph, is a very high, often unrealistic, level of education and literacy. Voters should be fully aware of the current political and economic scenario, with complete insight into the background and origin of mandates, beyond media manipulation and election campaigns. Only then would they be able to make informed decisions and decide who deserves their ballot. The citizens should also be able to identify exploitation and populist campaigns in order to truly influence their country's future. In the words of Benito Mussolini, “Democracy is talking itself to death. The people do not know what they want; they do not know what is best for them. There is too much foolishness, too much lost motion.”

Since democracy operates as a decentralized governance system with interconnected departments and institutions, even making small alterations in policy and declarations requires lengthy procedures. Every legislative bill demands extensive debates, discussions, and consensus by various parties, and plenty of compromising is required to pass a law. These delays can prove disastrous in a time-critical situation. Another fact that many do not comprehend is that it is one of the least cost-effective means of governance. Elections are pricy and slow, and they pass through a myriad of social, economic, and administrative challenges. They require vast and well-thought-out planning and take a lot of time and manpower to control and conduct effectively.

Mid-term elections, caused by a shift of power, an overthrow of the government, the resignation of officials, or even sudden deaths, usually end up costing more than end-term ones. This capital is acquired from public spending and tax money. Even for the USA, which is perhaps the most successful

democracy in history, the cost of presidential elections is in billions.

Populism is another consequence of excessively democratic rule. Charismatic leaders claim to champion the interests of the labour and lower classes by disparaging large business and financial establishments and military elites or establishments. Such leaders claim to embody the will of the people and lead their struggle against corrupt elites, often to consolidate their own power. They use extreme nationalism, conspiracy mongering, and demagoguery to accumulate public appreciation and conceal their failures. The case study of Hugo

Chavez, the late populist leader of Venezuela, is a textbook case of populist manipulation. Chavez declared ahead of the country's 2006 election. “You are not going to re-elect Chavez, really; you are going to re-elect yourselves. The people will re-elect the people. Chavez is nothing but an instrument of the people.” His regime started off strong, with subsidies on refrigerators and the nationalization of large corporations, but his socialist policies did not bring the welfare he promised. Plights like inflation, incompetence, and unsuccessful food and wealth redistribution left the country in turmoil. His death in 2013 and a lack of qualified succession led to turbulent food shortages and wild gang cultures. It was not populism itself, but what came afterwards, that destroyed the country. This case is a stark reminder of the danger of unchecked populism, showcasing the need for pragmatic democratic institutions and reasonable governance.

Democracy, both as a theoretical framework and as a practical structure, has come a long way from ancient Greece to contemporary dominance and acceptance. It is arguably the most successful political structure in existence, but still nowhere near completion or, utterly, perfection. As we adopt democratic principles globally, it also coerces us to remain vigilant and navigate around its paradoxes, limitations and restrictions. By upholding this doctrine and confronting its limitations, we strive to make a more fair, equitable and harmonious society.

Only then will we be able to make it what it is truly supposed to be “of the people, by the people, for the people”. ■

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Public administration is the study and practice of policy-making and management. Working within local, state/provincial and federal governments as well as nonprofit organizations and private partners, public administration professionals use their expertise in management and public policy to effect positive change for their communities. Overall, this public service involves the management of organizations associated with social, economic, and political life. The field of public administration tackles some of society's most intractable challenges in areas like housing, poverty

Public administration is a field of study that demystifies the mechanics of government and makes it accessible, as with its help, leaders serve communities to advance the common good and effect positive change. Going through the evolutionary process, from ancient societies like Rome and Egypt, to today, this field began to be studied in light of different approaches mainly because it has to adjust and accommodate to a rapidly, at times unpredictably, changing environments. Today, there are various approaches which have been developed since the discipline was identified as an independent field of enquiry by Woodrow Wilson in 1887. This article explores different approaches to the study of Public Administration.

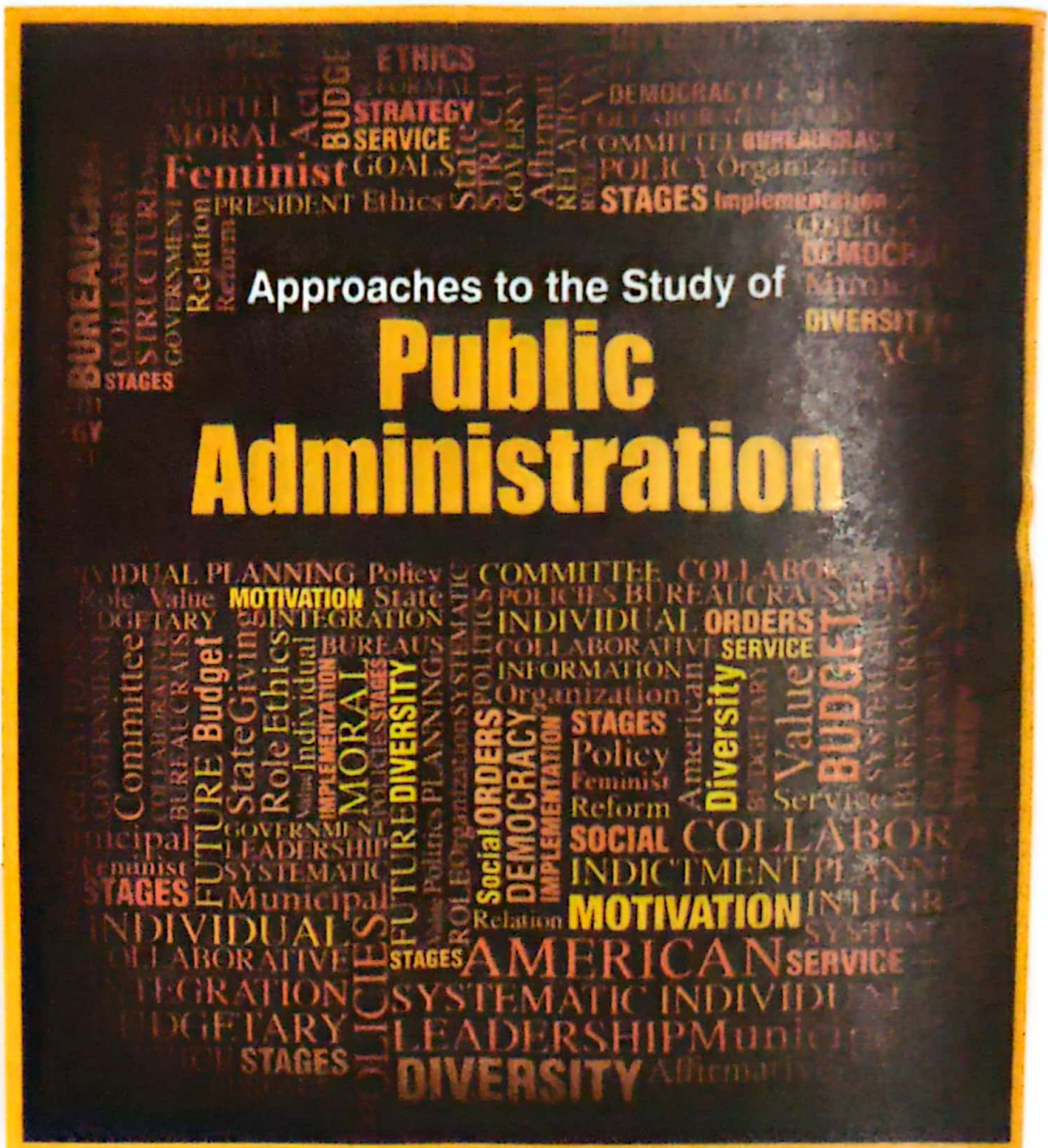
and the environment. Whether they work in government or in the nonprofit sector, public administrators translate theory into practice, enacting policies that set quantifiable goals and achieve measurable results.

Definitions

Various definitions of Public Administration are as follows:

Woodrow Wilson: Prof. Woodrow Wilson, the pioneer of the social science of Public Administration, defines it as "a detailed and systematic application of law."

L.D. White: Public Administration consists of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfilment of public policy as declared by authority.



Luther Gulick: Public administration is that part of the science of administration, which has to do with the government; it concerns itself primarily with the executive branch where the work of the government is done; though, there are obviously problems also in connection with the legislature and judicial branch.

Public Policy vs. Public Administration

These fields are often discussed as being the same, but there is a key difference when comparing public policy with public administration. Public policy focuses more on the analysis and creation of policies intended to benefit society, while public administration concentrates on the implementation of those policies.

Approaches to Study

Like other social sciences, in Public Administration too, there are various approaches which have been developed since the discipline was identified as an independent field of enquiry. These approaches are as follows:

1. Classical Approach

The classical approach to public administration, derived from Weber, Wilson and Taylor, largely

dominated most of the 20th century. In fact, Weber's theory of bureaucracy is the most important theoretical principle of the traditional model of public administration. This classical model was thought to be the best way for organizing the public sector work and undoubtedly worked well for a long time. In general, it is characterized as an administration under the formal control of the political leadership, based on a strictly hierarchical model of bureaucracy, staffed by permanent, neutral and anonymous officials, motivated only by the public interest, serving and governing party equally, and not contributing to policy but merely administering those policies decided by the politicians. The key feature of this model is that "in the modern governmental systems, professional bureaucrats execute the tasks of public administration while separated from the political mechanisms as well as from the private sphere. Its main components are:

a. Scientific Management Approach

The credit for originating this approach goes to F. W. Taylor who formulated universal principles of scientific management to improve productivity and efficiency in organizations. To him, "Management rests upon clearly formulated laws and principles with universal applicability in all organizations which entitles it to the status of a true science." The essence of Taylor's concept of management is that the welfare of whole society lies in the voluntary cooperation between workers and management while applying scientific method in all jobs. The principle object of management, according to Taylor, should be maximum production, along with maximum prosperity for the employer and the employees. Evidently, his philosophy of scientific management is that there is no conflict in the interests of management and workers.

b. Bureaucratic Approach

Bureaucratic approach is an offshoot of classical approach that emerged in the beginning of the 20th century. The main exponent of this approach is Max Weber, a German scholar. He expressed his views at a time when bureaucratic organization was at its peak and its impact was clearly visible on the society. Like a true scientist, he analyzed the origin, nature, development and consequences of the then bureaucracy in its sociological, historical and comparative context. However, he based his concept of bureaucracy on authority which, to him, means a command of definite content that elicits obedience on the part of specific

individuals. Though he has discussed three type of authority—legal, traditional and charismatic—yet he preferred legal one because of inherent rationalism in it and designed his model of bureaucracy on it.

2. Behavioural Approach

The classical approach to public administration focused on structural or institutional aspects of organization and ignored elements of human behaviour such as leadership, satisfaction, morale, motivation, etc. The behavioural approach attempts to address these issues. It deals with scientific study of human behaviour in diverse environmental settings.

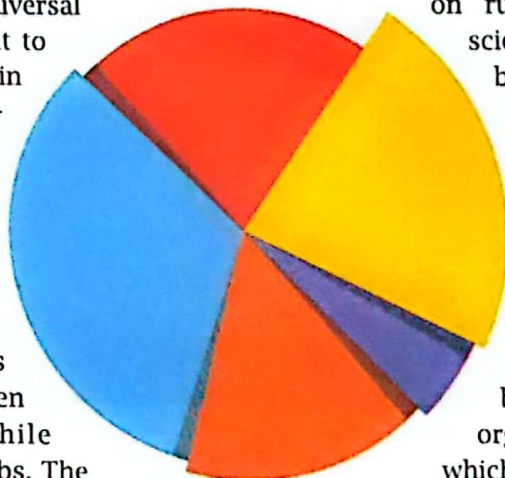
Behavioural approach refers to the scientific study of human beings in diverse administrative settings.

The subject matter of this approach is human behaviour and it derives all conclusions therefrom. It tries to understand why officials and public employees act as they do. It applies various tools from behavioural science to understand human behaviour in varied

administrative situations. Instead of focusing on rules and regulations; it conducts scientific study of individual and group behaviour in different cultural contexts. To this end, the organizations have been viewed as a social system where interpersonal relations among the employees and their informal communication are given due weight.

Originated in the United States, this approach focuses on the actual behavior of persons and groups in organizations and has four characters which are of follows

1. The increased attention to the individual and his relationship to the administrative organization in which scientific management approach tended to consider him rather as a thing or a means, without taking into account the different aspects of his personality and his relationship to interests and social group other than the administrative organization in which he worked. Increased attention to the individual in administration is based on more realistic research concerning motivation, decision-making process and nature of authority.
2. Administration is studied as a social system with the result that whereas formerly attention was concentrated exclusively on formal and rational relationships of the organization, now informal relationships of men in the organization receive equal attention.
3. On account of these developments, more importance is given to communication. This is understandable because an administration is described as a complex aggregate of



human relations. Under the traditional approaches the only recognized means of communication were the formal orders and circulars issued by the superior to the subordinates and reports and returns submitted by the subordinates to their superiors. But under the new approach, the informal means of contact and communication receive of as much attention as the formal ones.

4. Replacement of the theory of sovereignty by that of legitimacy. The concept of political sovereignty had given birth to the theories of hierarchical structure, line of authority, chain of command, delegation and others. Under the new approach, there is an increasing tendency to analyze the reason why given persons, considered individually and collectively, feel that they must obey orders. Thus emphasis is put on administrative leadership and motivation.

Institutional and Structural Approach

This approach to the study of public administration is the oldest and, in point of number, it has the largest following. But it is least homogenous of all schools of public administration as it includes among its protagonists, teachers and research workers with varied training, ranging from political scientist to specialists in scientific management techniques. The common features of this school which distinguish it from other schools of administrative thought are of follows:

1. The followers of this school took policy administration dichotomy quite seriously. They defined the task of administration as nonpolitical or technical which lay merely in carrying out the will of political authority by either neutral means. They directed all their efforts to discover 'principles' of public administration.

2. The early work of this school is characterized by an empirical and pragmatic approach. Their sole aim was to describe a set of facts and not to build any theories. This view prevails particularly in United States during the period between the two World Wars and its greatest exponents were L. D. White and Luther Gulick.

Since the fifties of the last century, there has been a shift in this approach. Although the study has retained its institutional character, yet the policy-administration dichotomy has been qualified after being found too hasty. More attention is now being given to the normative aspects of public administration and administration is being viewed as an element in

political theory and the accepted political values. Scholars like John. M. Gaus and Paul Appleby of this school have frankly given up the technical view of public administration and they approach public administration from the broad political standpoint.

Some Other Approaches

Legal approach: The legal approach to public administration is related to the judicial functions in government and emphasizes the administrators' role in applying and enforcing the law. It is also concerned with the adjudicatory role of public organizations.

Philosophical approach: By a philosophy of public administration is meant the scheme of classification and analysis, which looks at values of the administrative structures and the values and expectations of the individuals or society it ought to serve. By a philosophy of public administration is meant that scheme of classification and analysis, which looks at values of the administrative structures and the values and expectations of the individuals or society it ought to serve.

Systems approach: The systems approach — including systems analysis, operations research, management science and systems engineering — is a practical philosophy for executing decision-oriented interdisciplinary research, based on quantitative models of a total problem.

Case method approach: As in management, the case method is the most popular and practical way to learn. The aim of this method is to show to the student real examples and help them to understand how the theory studied can be applied.

Conclusion

Public administration has a long history that has been going in parallel with the very notion of government. The classical approach to public administration dominated most of the 20th century. This model started to change in the mid-1980s to a flexible, market-based form of public management. All this led not simply to a minor change in management style, but to a change in the role of government in society and the relation between government and citizenry. The introduction of modern managerial approach and the adoption of new forms of public management mean the emergence of a new paradigm in the public sector. ■

The writer is a lecturer at a private sector university.

In public administration good sense would seem to require the public expectation be kept at the lowest possible level in order to minimize the eventual disappointment.

John Kenneth Galbraith

From Plassey to Pakistan

Prof. Sharif al-Mujahid

In modern Indian history, Plassey (1757) started a trend that culminated a hundred years later in the complete supremacy of the British over the entire Subcontinent. The battles, among others, of Buxar (1764), Seringapatam (1799) and Miani, Sindh (1843), the occupation of the Punjab (1849) and the annexation of Oudh (1856) strengthened this trend and spelled disaster for the Indian Muslims.

By 1858, the Muslims stood shattered - not only politically but also economically. The British economic policy was, generally, unfair to Indians, but what particularly stung the Muslims was the Permanent Settlement of 1793 and Macaulay's Minute of 1835. If one had dispossessed the Muslim nobility of most of their lands and made Muslim peasantry subservient to the Hindu tax collectors - now raised to the position of landlords - the other had made the Muslims illiterate so far as the official language was concerned and, therefore, unfit for any government

employment. The East India Company's commercial policy had already rendered Muslim artisans unemployed - and in penury.

This general trend towards the economic collapse of Muslims received further impetus in the post-1857 period when the British, incensed at Muslim 'audacity' at staging a revolution against them, launched an avowedly anti-Muslim policy. Not only were their lands confiscated without rhyme or reason, but also all avenues of employment were closed to them. In a word, they were made to stew in their own juice - humbled, frustrated and persecuted.

And within the years, the British policy had so pulverized the Muslims that by the early 1870s, there was scarcely a government office in Calcutta in which a Muslim could 'hope for any post above the rank of a porter, messenger, filler of inkpots and mender of pens,' according to Hunter, the most-cited author of "The Indian Mussalmans" (1870).

In any case, this was the bleak situation that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was called upon to face in the post-1857 period. His panacea was education - modern education. And he was able to bring about, within his own lifetime, a cultural revival among the Indian Mussalmans. To quote Karaemer (1931), "Aligarh, with all the forces it organized, was the starting point of a slow awakening of the Muslim community out of its listlessness. It has been the most potent factor in breaking down the crushing feeling of backwardness and despondency."

Initially educational and cultural in character, the Aligarh Movement became politically-oriented a bit later, chiefly as a result of the growth of communal consciousness among the Hindus - as evidenced by the (Banaras) Hindu agitation for the ouster of Urdu from courts in 1867 and thereafter. Among other things, the numerical educational and economic superiority of the Hindus obliged Sir Sayyid to demand the reservation of seats for Muslims in the Imperial Council since, he felt, the educationally and economically backward Muslims stood no chance of getting elected by a



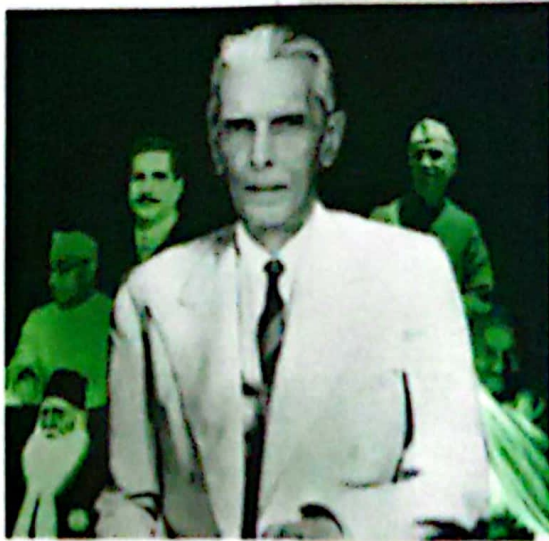
predominantly Hindu electorate on the basis of sheer merit.

Once this approach was decided upon, there was no question of Muslims joining the Congress when it was founded in 1885. Although, at the instance of Sir Sayyid, the Muslims shunned politics at the time, the course of events during the next two decades convinced them that without political activity, their rights stood in danger of being trampled upon. For one thing, several Congress stalwarts, such as Balgangadhar Tilak and Madan Mohan Malaviya, had mounted agitation in favour of cow-protection and Hindi, while the Congress, as a body, demanded a representative form of government on a non-denominational basis, a parliamentary system and the annulment of the Partition of Bengal. The partition of Bengal, though decided upon in 1905 for purely administrative reasons, ended West Bengal Hindus' domination over Muslim East Bengal and was detested by the Hindus but welcomed by Muslims. But what agitated the Muslims most was that joint electorates, which the Congress so stoutly advocated, jeopardized their chances of getting elected since the dice were in Hindus' favour - 3:1.

Thus came the Muslim demand for separate electorates in 1906, if only to ensure their genuine representation in the proposed assemblies. Inter alia, the demand implied that the Muslims, though a minority, were yet a distinct political entity in India's body-politic, and separate electorates, which were meant to keep their entity intact in any future constitutional arrangement, became henceforth the sheet-anchor of Muslim politics. They were finally conceded in the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909.

Meanwhile, the Muslims' compelling urge to organize themselves politically led to the founding of the All India Muslim League (1906). With Aga Khan as the permanent president and the Nawab of Dacca, Nawab Muhsin-ul-Mulk and Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk as its core leadership, the League was pledged to safeguard Muslim interests and articulate their demands.

The rather precipitative annulment of the Bengal Partition (1911) in the face of HMG's plighted word gave Muslims a rude shock. The British complicity in the spoliation of the Ottoman Empire (Libya in 1911 and the Balkan War, 1912-13) and in the strangulation of Iran (1907) alienated the Muslims all the more. So did the British opposition to the Aligarh University scheme (1911-12). This trend towards alienation climaxed in the Cawnpore Mosque affair (1913). These developments disillusioned Muslims, as nothing else had done since 1857-58. Muslims' lack of faith in British promises, British justice and British conduct launched them upon a career of anti-Britishness.



Two major developments followed this disillusionment. First, the League was brought into line with the Congress and the ideal of self-government was incorporated into its plank in 1913. Second, the Muslims presently turned to Hindus, put faith in their words and tried to find their due place within the Indian nationalist framework and dispensation. This led directly to the Congress-League Lucknow Pact (1916), which was masterminded by Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The Pact conceded Muslims the right to separate electorates and, later, became the basis for the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms (1919). The Muslims' anti-British career came to a head when the iniquitous Treaty of Sèvres (1920) was published.

Above all, that treaty sought to cripple Turkey as an independent state for all time to come. This was compounded by British complicity in the subsequent Greek invasion of Turkey. No wonder, the Muslims seethed with rage, strained at the leash and yearned for action - bold action. They, however, did not have to wait for long. For, about the same time, the British, perhaps unwittingly, hurled, in the face of the Indians, the grotesque Rowlatt Act (1919), the inhuman butchery at Jalianwala Bagh at Amritsar and numerous other galling crimes in

the various districts of Punjab that were put under martial law. The "Punjab wrongs" sent the Congress and the Hindus in a fighting mood. Launched in the name of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs, and with a view to undoing both, the Khilafat (and the civil disobedience) Movement soon took the entire country by storm and the British by surprise. The response to the Khilafat call was spontaneous and astonishing. Incredible were the sacrifices the people underwent joyously. Some 30,000 people courted arrests in just 30 days; people boycotted government institutions and courts, quit government jobs and returned titles in large numbers. The major burden of the movement was, however, carried on by the Muslims.

All this, however, came to no avail since the Hindu-Muslim alliance could not possibly be permanent. After the arrest of the Ali Brothers, Gandhi, the Khilafat dictator, seized upon a small incident at Chauri Chaura to call off the Movement, early in February 1922. Two years later came the fateful Turkish decision to abolish the institution of Khilafat itself on March 3, 1924.

The failure of the Khilafat Movement was followed by a gruesome chapter in India's communal history. The founding of the avowedly anti-Muslim Shuddhi and Sangathan movements led to the rise of the Tabligh and Tanzim movements among Muslims. Communal riots became widespread. These riots and the Congress leaders' attitude towards them bitterly disillusioned the Muslims, and even Maulana

Mohamed Ali, Gandhi's comrade-in-arms during the Khilafat Movement.

During the 1920s, Jinnah, as usual, tried for a communal settlement on the basis of give-and-take. His Delhi Muslim Proposals (1927) were initially accepted by the Congress but were later rejected in the Nehru Report (1928), the Congress constitution for free India. Subsequently, Jinnah formulated his "Fourteen Points" (1929) as a riposte to the Nehru Report, which became the core Muslim demands at the ensuing Round Table Conference (1930-32), called by the British Government in London to consider further reforms. The Government of India Act, 1935, which was born out of the deliberations of this Conference, conceded some of the basic demands, notably the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency, the introduction of reforms in the NWFP, and one-third representation at the centre, but watered down, as in the reforms of 1919, their majorities in Punjab and Bengal. The Act provided for provincial autonomy, and a responsible federal government at the Centre when a sufficient number of princely states acceded to the Federation. The federal part of the 1935 Act, however, was never implemented.

After the ensuing provincial elections (1937), the Congress, which swept the polls in the general constituencies, initially assumed power in six out of India's eleven provinces. In all of them, exclusive Congress ministries were set up, and Muslims, as a political group, were kept out of the portals of power. The Congress was, of course, willing to take individual Muslims into the cabinet, but only when they had signed the Congress pledge. The League naturally felt insulted and the Muslims were seriously alarmed. No wonder Jinnah asserted in October 1937 that "the Muslims can expect neither justice nor fair play" at the hands of the Congress.

Certain other features of the developing Congress policy confirmed the Muslims in their attitude towards the Congress, which presently launched a series of avowedly, anti-Muslim measures, presumably aiming at the cultural assimilation of the Muslims.

By late 1939, when the Congress Ministries resigned

on the war issue, the Muslims had the time and the opportunity to search their inner social consciousness in a desperate bid to find coherent and meaningful articulation for their cherished yearnings. To their immense joy, they discovered the existence of the spiritual essence of national life. The Muslims, who had till then basked in what Prof. Barker calls "unreflective silence," also found that "their sentiments of nationality had flamed into nationalism." Nor was their nationalism, to use Lord Acton's phrase, to be a "soul as it were wandering in search of a body in which to begin life over again and dies out finding none."

Although the idea of separate Muslim "nationality" dates back, at least, to the previous century, no one had argued the case for separate Muslim nationhood as cogently and as eloquently as did Jinnah. He said, *"We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, names and nomenclatures, sense of values and proportion, legal laws and moral code, customs and calendar, history and tradition, aptitude and ambition; in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law, we are a nation."*

Extremely significant was the impact on Indian politics of this discovery of, and this claim to, separate nationhood. From a minority supplicating for safeguards, even paper safeguards (which the Congress had so haughtily refused to concede), they had turned into a nation, separate and distinct from others, and entitled in their own right to a separate, sovereign state in the sub-continent. Having so cogently argued the case for separate Muslim nationhood, Jinnah induced the Muslim League to adopt the establishment of a Muslim state in the north-western and eastern zones of India as its goal. This occurred at the League Lahore session on March 23, 1940.

And once the intellectual base had been defined, the goal propounded in cogent, comprehensive terms, and the newly revitalised Muslim League under Jinnah took upon itself to pursue that relentlessly and carry the Pakistan message to the remotest corners of the subcontinent, it was merely a matter of time before it caught on like prairie fire. And soon it did - so that the Muslims returned an overwhelming electoral verdict in favour of Pakistan in the critical 1945-46 general elections.

And, thanks to the astute leadership, powerful advocacy and brilliant strategy of Jinnah and the supreme sacrifices of his hundred million followers, Pakistan was wrested from unwilling hands in 1947, and dedicated to the triple principle of liberty, peace and progress. ■

(Courtesy: Business Recorder)

- The writer was the Founder-Director of the Quaid-i-Azam Academy, and authored *Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation* (1981), the only work to qualify for the President's Award for Best Books on Quaid-i-Azam.



The role of Ulema in the Pakistan Movement was significant and multifaceted and is worth remembering. These great scholars contributed to the ideological foundation, provided leadership, mobilized public support and played a critical role in the cultural and religious consolidation of the idea of Pakistan. Their influence was evident in various phases of the movement, and their contributions were instrumental in the eventual creation of Pakistan in 1947. The Ulema's involvement ensured that the Pakistan Movement was not just a political struggle but also a deeply religious and cultural one, rooted in the distinct identity of Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent.

In 1940, the All India Muslim League formally demanded the partition of British India and the creation of Pakistan as a separate Muslim state in the Subcontinent. Thereafter, during the pre-independence talks in 1946, the British government found the stand of the Muslim League on separation and the stance of the Indian National Congress on the territorial unity of India as irreconcilable for ever.

Thereupon, the British decided to partition India into two dominions; ergo, they transferred the power to the two states of India and Pakistan on August 15, 1947. Pakistan, however, came into existence in two parts: West Pakistan (today's Pakistan) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The two arms of Pakistan were, thus, divided by 1,600 km (1,000 miles) of Indian territory.

The creation of Pakistan was obviously a direct outcome of insurmountable struggle and countless sacrifices offered by the Muslims of the Subcontinent from all walks of life.

Apart from the role of politicians, the contributions of writers, theologians, journalists, students, women and mainly Ulema and Mashaikh in the struggle for the freedom of Muslims in India are worth remembering. They all

channelled their energies and sources into the making of a Muslim nation and materializing the idea of what is called Two-Nation Theory.

In fact, the credit for the success of the struggle - formally known as the Independence Movement - cannot be attributed to a mere single section of society. Irrespective of professions and strata of society, each and every Muslim was motivated and mobilized to take an active part in this movement.

Broadly speaking, almost all the Ulema and Mashaikh, as well as other prominent leaders belonging to all schools of thought from the entire Subcontinent, readily propped up the cause of what was named the 'Pakistan Movement'. Their services included educating their disciples and awakening the general masses to the need of Pakistan for the Muslims of the Subcontinent, making physical and personal contacts with the people even in distant areas, convening public meetings and ingraining the idea of the inevitable necessity of an independent country in their minds. Moreover, while complying with the instructions and directions of the Quaid-i-Azam in a strict manner under his able guidance and instructions, the Ulema and Mashaikh spread the message in all corners of the subcontinent, infused the Muslims and worked ceaselessly to achieve the goal.

A brief analysis of several prominent Ulema who played key roles in the Pakistan Movement is as under:

1. Allama Shabbir Ahmed Usmani

Of the Ulema and Mashaikh, Allama Shabbir Ahmed Usmani was the outstanding personality who rendered really valuable services for mobilizing and gearing up the movement of Pakistan. A graduate of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, Allama Usmani established Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam on October 26, 1946, which was

Ulema and the Pakistan Movement

Remembering the contributions of religious class towards independence

a supporter of Muslim League and its demand to create Pakistan. (Quaid-i-Azam was highly appreciative of the services of Allama Usmani for Pakistan's creation. Allama also hoisted the first flag of Pakistan in Karachi on August 14, 1947. According to the will of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he also led his funeral prayer.)

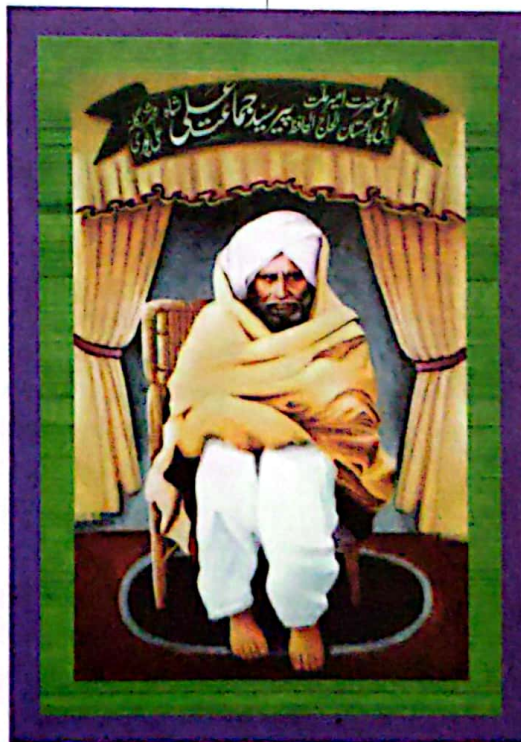
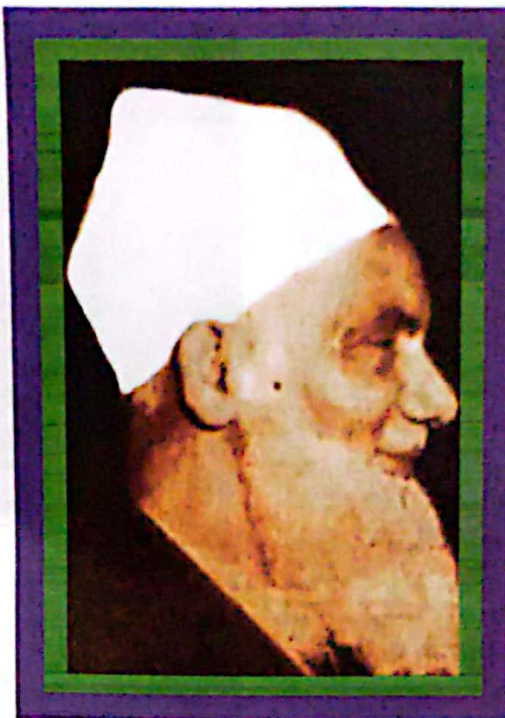
Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and other noted Ulema and Mashaikh had a great number of followers spread all over the Subcontinent who put their hearts into speeding up the movement for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the United India.

2. Pir Jamat Ali Shah

Another prominent name among the Ulema was Pir Jamat Ali Shah, who had millions of followers in the country. In spite of his old age and weak health, Pir Jamat Ali Shah toured throughout the country to get support for AIML and Pakistan. After the passage of the Lahore Resolution, he gave all-out support to the Quaid-i-Azam for the achievement of Pakistan. He advised his followers to work for the AIML and emphatically declared that he would not lead the funeral prayers of any devotee if he had not participated in the Pakistan Movement in any capacity. Pir Jamat Ali Shah supported AIML during the elections of 1945-46. His sincere campaign in these elections resulted in the grand success of AIML candidates.

3. Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif

The credit for making the Pakistan Movement a success also goes to Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif who joined AIML in 1945. When Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his followers were opposing the Pakistan Movement, thousands of Pir Sahib's followers worked to promote the cause of the Pakistan Movement. In the NWFP referendum, he convinced the people to cast their votes in favour of Pakistan. The invaluable services that he rendered to the AIML during the



referendum in NWFP will never be forgotten.

4. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi was a staunch supporter of Quaid-i-Azam, the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan. Though primarily a religious scholar, Thanvi's endorsement of the Pakistan Movement influenced many of his followers and added religious weight to the cause.

5. Maulana Zafar Ahmad Usmani

Another important scholar, he actively participated in the movement and supported the idea of Pakistan as a separate state for Muslims. Maulana was very popular amongst the Muslims of Bengal and Assam on account of his learning,

piety and candidness. He toured Sylhet and spent the holy month of Ramzan and explained the importance and need of Pakistan for the Muslims. He worked hard to organize them and generate support for Pakistan.

Thus the systematic and organized campaign of the League in which Maulana Zafar Ahmad Usmani, along with other Ulema, played a vital role, resulted in a decisive victory. The voting was 239,619 for separation and joining East Bengal 181,041 against separation.

There are a large number of Ulema and Mashaikh whose invaluable services have led to the creation of Pakistan as an independent state. The services of these great people proved a strong backing, and boosted efforts carried out by the Muslims of the Subcontinent for a separate Muslim state, where they would spend their lives in accordance with Islamic laws and principles without any fear.

In conclusion, it can be asserted that the role of Ulema and Mashaikh in the Pakistan Movement is really highly laudable and worth writing in letters of gold. They prevailed upon their followers to awaken the common people which enabled the nation to reach the goal that they had resolved for. ■

The writer is a lecturer of history.

On June 5, 2024, the annual World Environment Day was celebrated, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosting the event. The focus of this year's global commemoration was on land restoration, desertification and drought resilience. Being a country hard hit by climate change, Pakistan stands at a critical juncture as land degradation, due to the rising impacts of climate change, is a serious risk to Pakistan's food and water security. Agriculture is the lifeline of Pakistan and land degradation, coupled with forest degradation, would cast serious impacts, that would further aggravate the problem. So, Pakistan needs the support and backing of the international community in its fight against desertification and land degradation.

Land degradation and desertification, mostly caused by climate change-induced erratic weather patterns, has emerged as a big challenge to a large number of countries, including Pakistan. This phenomenon makes around six million hectares of land unproductive and causes about USD 42 billion in economic losses globally every year. This situation may lead to starvation and hunger due to water scarcity in the next few decades, if not controlled properly.

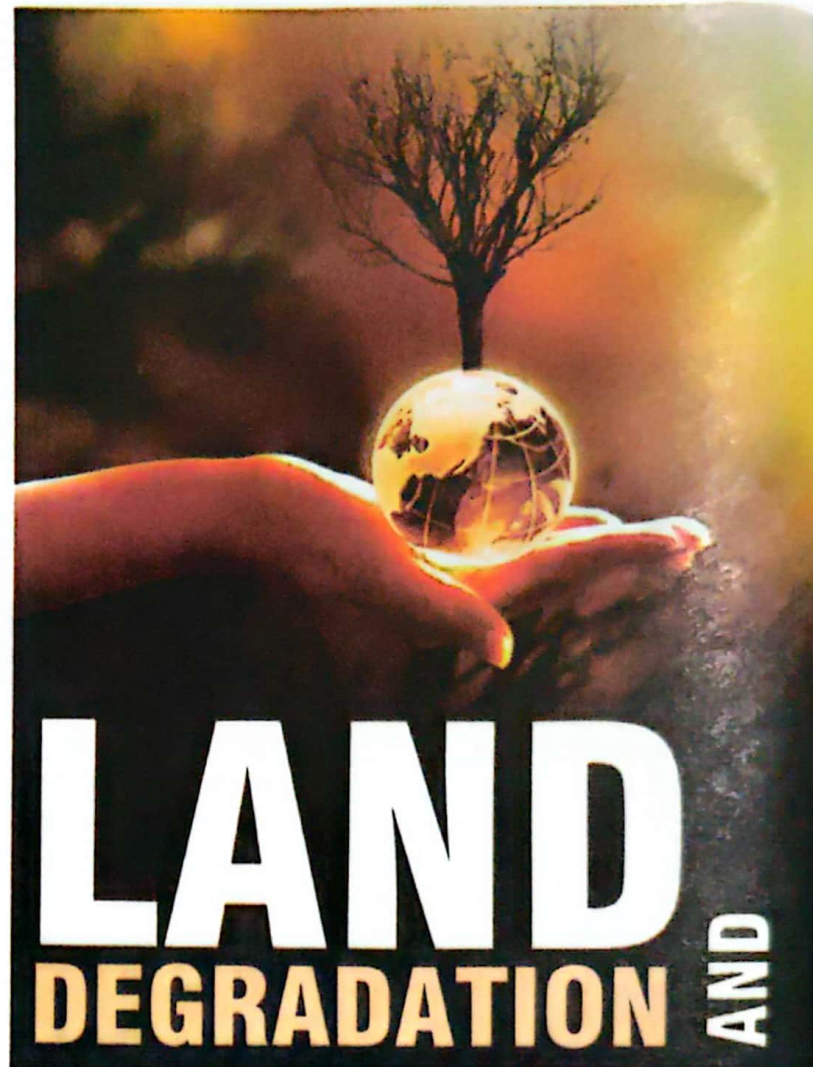
A United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) report has revealed that more than 3.2 billion people, or two in every five, worldwide are affected by land degradation and desertification and up to 143 million could move within their countries by 2050 to escape water scarcity and falling crop productivity, mainly caused by climate change. Also, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) disclosed that the planet would reach a 1.5°C increase in temperatures by 2030, leading to extreme droughts, food shortage and floods.

Land restoration plays a vital role in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, it is important to understand the issue of land degradation and restoration from a broader perspective.

What is land degradation?

Land degradation is a negative trend in land condition caused by direct or indirect human-induced processes, including anthropogenic climate change, expressed as a long-term reduction or loss of at least one of the following: biological productivity, ecological integrity or value to humans.

Land has always been a central focus in the climate change debate because it both influences and is



LAND DEGRADATION AND

impacted by climate change. Forests, trees and vegetation are crucial as carbon dioxide sinks. However, land degradation and desertification pose significant challenges to the environment.

Definitions

Simply put, it is the deterioration of land caused directly or indirectly by human activities. It is truly a global challenge, affecting at least 25% of land and as many as 3.2 billion people worldwide, with disproportionate impacts felt by women and girls.

a. According to the Convention on Combating Desertification

Land degradation means reduction or loss in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rainfed cropland, irrigated cropland or range, pasture, forest and woodlands resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns, such as soil erosion, caused by wind and/or water; deterioration of the physical, chemical and biological or economic properties of the soil; long-term loss of natural vegetation.

b. As per the FAO:

Land degradation is the reduction in the capability of



RESTORATION

the land to produce benefits from a particular land use under a specified form of land management.

c. UNEP's definition:

Land degradation is the temporary or permanent lowering of the productive capacity of land.

Causes

Land degradation is caused by multiple forces, including extreme weather conditions, particularly drought. It is also caused by human activities that pollute or degrade the quality of soils and land utility. It negatively affects food production, livelihoods and the production and provision of other ecosystem goods and services. Desertification is a form of land degradation by which fertile land becomes desert.

Impacts

Land provides critical ecosystem services and is inextricably tied to human well-being, influencing food security and livelihoods. But when land resources are overexploited and degraded, it has a detrimental impact on quality of life, leading to threats to food and water security and migration.

According to UNEP, "As of today, almost a quarter of the world's total land area has been degraded. This creates enormous problems not only for the billions of people who directly depend on agriculture, but it also

has far-reaching impacts affecting every single person on this planet today. These impacts include food shortages, volatility and increases in food prices caused by declines in the productivity of croplands, heightened impacts of climate change globally caused by the release of carbon and nitrous oxide from degrading land, and the threat of social instability from the forced migration that will result."

Some impacts of land degradation and desertification are:

1. Impact on climate change: Forests, trees and vegetation cover are important sinks of carbon dioxide. Land degradation, therefore, reduces the amount of carbon dioxide that is absorbed, and consequently leads to a rise in emissions.

2. Threat to food & water security: Land degradation and desertification have effects on food and water security.

3. Impact on biodiversity: Land degradation caused by factors such as extensive agriculture, deforestation and unmanaged urbanization and sprawl, is reducing the biodiversity of many land ecosystems.

The case of Pakistan

Land degradation and desertification is a serious problem globally, but it is more acute in case of Pakistan where almost three-fourths of the land is either already affected or likely to be affected.

Pakistan is among 110 countries in the world where about two-thirds of agricultural land and around 80 percent of arid and semi-arid lands are affected by land degradation, desertification and drought. According to the Sustainable Land Management Program, a project of the Ministry of Climate Change, every year, between 1.5 and 2.5 million hectares of irrigated land, 3.5 to 4 million hectares of rain-fed agricultural and 35 million hectares of rangelands are either becoming barren or non-productive due to desertification, land degradation and drought. The low-lying areas in Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, located directly on the banks of rivers, are facing increased problems of land degradation due to climate change impacts, floods, improper land use practices, over-grazing, deforestation and excessive removal of vegetation for fuel.

Initiatives to combat land degradation

The international community has recognized the importance of addressing the challenge of land degradation and desertification as urgent conditions for healthy ecosystems, food and water security and meeting climate change and biodiversity goals. As a result, various global initiatives have been taken to combat land degradation and desertification. Several of these initiatives include:

1. UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): A major global agreement on issues related to land, the Convention (UNCCD) was established in 1994 to protect and restore land, and to address the phenomenon of desertification, the process through which fertile and productive land becomes degraded and unfit for useful activities like agriculture.

2. Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Fund: Set up in 2018, the LDN Fund is an impact investment fund that invests in profit-generating sustainable land management and land restoration projects globally.

3. UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration: It aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean.

4. International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA): It is a global alliance for a drought-resilient future. IDRA mobilises political, technical and financial capital to enhance drought resilience in countries, cities and communities.

Pakistan's initiatives

To combat desertification, land degradation and drought, the federal government has launched SLMP Phase-I in nine dry-land districts of Pakistan where over 12,000 hectares of degraded rangeland were rehabilitated through re-seeding and community based restoration of the grazing management system. Similarly, around 8,000 hectares of additional land were brought under sustainable rain-fed agriculture and water conservation measures. Following successful implementation of SLMP Phase-I, the project was later extended to 14 desertification-prone districts under SLMP Phase-II, in 2015, to protect the fertile land from being converted into deserts.

The project was implemented in the high desertification and land degradation-prone areas of Chakwal, Bhakkar, Khushab, Layyah in Punjab; Tharparkar, Omarkot, Sanghar in Sindh, DI Khan, Lakki Marwat in KP; and Pashin, Kila Saifullah, Mastung, Katch and Lasbella in Balochistan.

However, government action alone is not enough and there is a need to foster a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders—communities, civil society, the private sector and international partners. By working together, they can combat land degradation and build a sustainable and resilient Pakistan.

Land restoration

Land degradation can be reversed through restoration and rehabilitation. Land restoration refers to the process of halting

degradation or rehabilitating degraded land, typically through activities like reforestation, soil conservation and the protection of natural processes. It aims to enhance biodiversity, restore ecosystem services and mitigate climate change impacts. According to the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD), "Land restoration is the ecological process to restore a natural and safe landscape for humans, wildlife, and plant communities. This process paves the way to protect our ecosystems, create economic development, help prevent natural disasters, e.g. floods, and increase soil productivity and food supplies. In short, land restoration is vital if we are to protect the environment, build resilience to drought and help feed a growing global population."

Significance of land restoration

Reverses environmental damage: Combats land degradation, drought, and desertification.

High return on investment: Each dollar invested can yield up to USD 30 in benefits from healthy ecosystems.

Boosts communities: Creates jobs, reduces poverty and improves livelihoods.

Strengthens resilience: Helps communities better withstand extreme weather events.

Combats climate change: Increases carbon storage in soil and slows the pace of warming.

Protects biodiversity: Restoring just 15% of degraded land could prevent a significant portion of expected species extinction.

Conclusion

Prioritizing land restoration, leading to drought resilience, is important for a country like Pakistan to protect our fertile land by combating desertification so that we can ensure our food security, biodiversity, and community resilience.

It is time to realize and act before it is too late. Communities and development partners need to join hands with the government to invest in land restoration projects, making land management practices sustainable to check land degradation and enhance the ecosystem's productivity. The reforestation efforts also need to be supported

by all. It is an undeniable fact that environmental degradation and climate change are causing devastating effects on our land and its productivity, risking our food security. ■

The writer is an Assistant Professor of Botany.



THE HIGH SEAS TREATY



Osman Khan

In June last year, 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a landmark legally binding marine biodiversity agreement that aims to protect the world's ocean and its stewardship in areas beyond national jurisdiction. As an instrument of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the "Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement," commonly known as the High Seas Treaty, will bring "protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction" into the remit of global environmental governance. The Treaty addresses many of the governance gaps that have plagued the ocean, setting out clearer ways to conserve biodiversity in the high seas.

Introduction

Formally called the "Agreement on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction" and also known as BBNJ or High Seas Treaty, this new international legal framework under UNCLOS aims for maintaining the ecological health of the oceans. The treaty is meant to reduce pollution and promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and other marine resources in ocean waters outside the national jurisdiction of any country.

The High Seas

Around two-thirds of the Earth's ocean lies beyond national boundaries. This expansive area is referred to as the 'high seas', 'international waters', or 'areas beyond national jurisdiction.' According to the 1958 Geneva Convention on the High Seas, parts of the sea that are not included in the territorial waters or the internal waters of a country are

known as the high seas.

It is the area beyond a country's Exclusive Economic Zone (that extends up to 200 nautical miles from the coastline) and till where a nation has jurisdiction over living and non-living resources.

The high seas are home to an intricate tapestry of life that plays a crucial role in maintaining the health and balance of our planet – from species of high commercial and societal importance such as tuna and whales, to unique, unexplored ecosystems such as deep hydrothermal vents and seamounts.

Since the high seas typically are distant from the immediate surroundings of coastal communities, their rich biodiversity is not immune to the impact of human activities. As of today, no country is responsible for the management and protection of resources on the high seas. Hence, the growing recognition of the critical role this vast oceanic realm plays in our global ecosystem led to a rise in international efforts to safeguard marine biodiversity in international waters. Following decades of negotiations, these efforts finally reached a historical milestone with the adoption of the BBNJ.

The Treaty

This agreement contains 75 articles that aim at protecting, caring for and ensuring the responsible use of the marine environment, maintaining the integrity of ocean ecosystems and conserving the inherent value of marine biological diversity. It provides a legal framework for addressing various stressors affecting the marine environment in the high seas. It will play a crucial role in achieving the recent ambitious "30x30" initiative to



protect 30% of marine ecosystems by 2030.

Key Objectives

The Treaty aims at taking stewardship of the ocean on behalf of present and future generations, in line with the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Following are its principal objectives:

a. Conservation and protection of marine ecology

The treaty provides, for the first time, a legal basis for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the high seas. This is a major step forward in protecting biodiversity in line with the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Kunming-Montreal Global Framework for Biodiversity and for sharing the benefits that arise from the utilization of marine resources in a fair and equitable manner.

b. Cleaner oceans

Toxic chemicals and millions of tons of plastic waste are flooding into coastal ecosystems, killing or injuring fish, sea turtles, seabirds and marine mammals, and making their way into the food chain and ultimately being consumed by humans. According to UN estimates, by 2050, there could be more plastic in the sea than fish unless action is taken.

The Treaty aims at strengthening resilience and contains provisions based on the polluter-pays principle as well as mechanisms for disputes. Under the treaty's provisions, parties must assess potential environmental impacts of any planned activities

beyond their jurisdictions.

c. Sustainably managing fish stocks

More than one-third of global fish stocks are overexploited, according to the UN. The treaty underlines the importance of capacity building and the transfer of marine technology, including the development and strengthening of institutional capacity and national regulatory frameworks or mechanisms.

d. Lowering temperatures

Global warming is pushing ocean temperatures to new heights, fuelling more frequent and intense storms, rising sea levels and the salinization of coastal lands and aquifers.

Addressing these urgent concerns, the treaty offers guidance, including through an integrated approach to ocean management that builds ecosystem resilience to tackle the adverse effects of climate change and ocean acidification, and maintains and restores ecosystem integrity, including carbon cycling services.

e. Mandatory environmental impact assessments

The treaty makes it mandatory to conduct prior EIA for any activity that could potentially pollute or damage the marine ecosystem, even if the activity is within a country's national jurisdiction but the impact is expected in the high seas.

Significance

a. Addressing the "Global Commons" challenge

The high seas, covering 64% of the ocean, are a global commons, leading to resource overexploitation, biodiversity loss and environmental challenges. The UN estimates that approximately 17 million tonnes of plastics were dumped into the oceans in 2021, with this amount expected to increase in the coming years. This treaty has been compared to the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. It could lead to the protection of the vast ocean and the sustainable use of marine resources.

b. Complementing UNCLOS

BBNJ is in line with the principles of the UNCLOS, which forms the overarching legal framework for the oceans. UNCLOS sets general principles for equitable access, resource usage and biodiversity protection in oceans but lacks specific implementation guidelines. The High Seas Treaty will address this gap, serving as an implementing agreement under UNCLOS once it comes into force. It will provide a legal mechanism to create and manage marine protected areas in the high seas.

c. Combating emerging threats

The treaty addresses emerging challenges such

Key Provisions of The Treaty

- ▶ Demarcation of marine protected areas: Currently, only 1.44% of the high seas are protected, falling short of targets set by the CBD to restore 30% of degraded coastal and marine ecosystems by 2030. MPAs are crucial for achieving these restoration goals.
- ▶ The treaty aims to ensure sustainable use of marine genetic resources, promoting equitable sharing of benefits and open access to generated knowledge.
- ▶ It mandates environmental impact assessments for major ocean activities to mitigate significant ecological impacts, with results shared internationally.
- ▶ Capacity building and technology transfer will support smaller nations in participating effectively in conservation efforts.
- ▶ A new international body will be established to manage marine conservation and establish MPAs in the high seas.





Need for UN High Seas Treaty

- ▶ The high seas cover 64% of the ocean and 43% of the Earth, hosting 2.2 million marine species and trillions of microorganisms.
- ▶ Oceans play a crucial role in the global climate by absorbing carbon dioxide and excess heat.
- ▶ Human activities, exacerbated by climate change, threaten marine biodiversity through pollution and other pressures.
- ▶ It aims to address these challenges by implementing conservation measures under UNCLOS, akin to the Paris Agreement under UNFCCC.

as deep-sea mining, ocean acidification and plastic pollution, which pose grave threats to the health and resilience of the high seas ecosystems.

d. Strengthening international cooperation

By establishing a robust institutional framework and decision-making processes, the treaty facilitates greater international cooperation and coordination in ocean governance. In a time when so many other multilateral agreements are failing to reach a successful conclusion, the ability for countries to come together around this new instrument for the oceans is indeed a win for multilateralism. Nothing was left open or unresolved. That is for sure a win for multilateralism and restores faith in humanity and the UN's ability to bring the world together toward shared goals.

e. Contribution to SDGs

The new agreement is critical to addressing the threats facing the ocean, and to the success of ocean-related goals and targets, including the 2030 Agenda.

Some of the goals and targets include SDG 14, which aims at, among other things, preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds by 2025, and ending overfishing through science-based management plans in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible.

The agreement will enable the establishment of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, to conserve and sustainably manage vital habitats and species in the high seas and the international seabed area.

Significance for Pakistan

Currently, Pakistan does not have a high seas exploration programme. As one of many developing countries involved in the BBNJ negotiations, Pakistan may derive important economic benefits to its blue economy from capitalising on high seas exploration. One of the most important benefits would be access to high seas fisheries, which could combat Pakistan's rising food insecurity. This would, in turn, create opportunities for employment and foreign direct investment, particularly under the capacity-building obligations under the Treaty. However, because high seas fisheries have been known to be exploited, Pakistan's access to these resources would be limited by considerations of sustainability and international cooperation. Pakistan may also be required to submit EIAs to the Scientific and Technical Body before commencing fishing activities and may be subject to increased monitoring by the BBNJ COP.

As a country facing increasing food and health insecurity, Pakistan may draw several benefits from a high seas programme and the information-sharing mechanism proposed under the treaty. This may also become an important source of trade revenue, as Pakistan can capitalise on its proximity to the high seas to its benefit.

Pakistan can also play an important role in the conservation of biodiversity in the Arabian Sea. The Arabian Sea is prone to various kinds of pollution, particularly oil spills, as the Sea is a popular trade route for transporting oil from oil-rich countries in the Arabian Gulf. In the waters adjacent to Pakistan's EEZ, Pakistan can develop ABMTs to prevent overfishing, polluting activities and damaging seabed mining. This can be done in conjunction with other States whose EEZs are bordering the High Seas, with which Pakistan has a strong relationship, such as Oman. This will allow for the sharing of resources and technological capacity necessary to promote conservation, which each State may be unable to fulfil on its own.

Conclusion

In a world facing the disastrous impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and waste, the High Seas Treaty reflects a renewed resolve of the international community to work together to address common challenges. This long-awaited and much-needed step will fill a void in the architecture of international environmental governance and open new vistas for strengthening regional and international collaboration. ■

The writer is an expert on International Law.

INDEBTED TO CHINA

15 countries that owe the most debt to China

In a bid to boost its economic growth, China has been lending to countries all over the world. This Asian economic powerhouse has been one of the fastest-growing economies over the last two decades. China has since become the largest creditor to low- and middle-income countries, with \$180 billion in loans in 2022. A large portion of this debt went to the countries' economic development and large infrastructure projects. By providing funding to these countries, China, in return, gains access to the resources that it needs to sustain its economy. This lending strategy also helps foster China's geopolitical ties with countries in key regions.

Ayeza Fatima

Over the last decade, China has played an increasingly important role in providing loans to countries across the globe, especially in the Global South, which, in conjunction with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is tied to infrastructural development. That funding flowed liberally into roads, airports, railways and power plants from Latin America to Southeast Asia and helped power economic growth among borrowing countries. While China claims the BRI is a driver of global development, critics in the West have long warned that the BRI employs debt-trap diplomacy, a tactic where one country uses loans to gain influence over another. Along the way, it drew many governments closer to Beijing and made China the world's largest creditor, while also sparking accusations of irresponsible lending. According to the World Bank's International Debt Report 2023, China's debt for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) has reached a record \$1.1 trillion.

According to the World Bank data, here are the top 15 countries in debt to China (total external debt to China 2022). It is to be noted here that external debt stock is the debt owed by a country to non-residents repayable in currency, goods or services. It is the sum of all public, publicly guaranteed and private non-guaranteed long-term debt and short-term debts.

1. Pakistan: \$26.6B

Pakistan holds the distinction of being the country most indebted to China, with \$26.6 billion in debt. Most of the debt was accrued to fund infrastructure and energy projects. Some experts point out, however, that the loans come with commercial interest rates, making repayment incredibly costly for Pakistan.

2. Angola: \$21.0B

Angola has the most debt to China among African countries, with \$21 billion, placing this oil-producing country at number 2 on this list. S&P estimates that 80% of debt to China was in oil-backed loans.

3. Sri Lanka: \$8.9B

China is also the largest creditor to Sri Lanka, extending some \$8.9 billion in loans to the island country. With a strategic maritime location, political pundits suggest that China may be aiming to take over its ports. Chinese investments continue to pour into Sri Lanka amid debt restructuring talks.

4. Ethiopia: \$6.8B

Ethiopia's \$6.8 billion debt to China puts it at number four on this list. Most of the country's debt to foreign governments belongs to China. Ethiopia was granted a suspension in payments to China in 2023, which ended in July 2024.

5. Kenya: \$6.7B

Kenya enters the top five on this list, owing China \$6.7 billion. Despite the substantial amount, Kenya's total

external debt is from multilateral borrowing, with the World Bank as its largest creditor. The IMF-World Bank classifies the country as being at high risk of debt distress.

6. Bangladesh: \$6.1B

Bangladesh takes the sixth spot on this list with \$6.1 billion in debt. The country is also part of China's BRI project. Even with this large debt to China, it only accounts for about 7% of Bangladesh's total external debt.

7. Zambia: \$6.1B

With \$6.1 billion in debt, Zambia takes the seventh spot on this list. One of several African countries with a massive debt to China, Zambia defaulted more than three years ago.

8. Laos: \$5.3B

China is Laos's biggest creditor, providing it with \$5.3 billion in funding for large infrastructure projects. This debt accounts for nearly half of the country's total external debt, making Laos the eighth country with the most debt to China.

9. Egypt: \$5.2B

Egypt takes 9th place on this list with a \$5.2 billion debt. Sitting in a strategic geographical location, this



its total public debt. Still, it ranks the country as the 10th with the most debt to China. Nigeria's government website dispels fears of its inability to service its massive debt.

11. Ecuador: \$4.1B

In 2022, Ecuador's government restructured its debt with China, earning the South American country billions of dollars in relief until 2025. However, the country still owes a hefty \$4.1 billion in loans, earning it the 11th spot on this list. China has become Ecuador's primary financial partner over the last decade.

12. Cambodia: \$4.0B

Cambodia owes China \$4.0 billion, ranking 12th on this list. This amount accounts for nearly 50% of the country's total external debt. Cambodia is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, which aims to improve connectivity and cooperation among various countries.

13. Côte d'Ivoire: \$3.9B

Côte d'Ivoire, or Ivory Coast, is one of several African countries that owe China the most. This West African country ranks 13th on this list and owes China some \$3.9 billion. Côte d'Ivoire is popular for its beach resorts and rainforests.

14. Belarus: \$3.9B

Belarus occupies 14th place on this list with approximately \$3.9 billion in debt. China is one of the top international lenders to the landlocked Eastern European country. Belarus manages its debt by increasing foreign direct investment (FDI from China).

15. Cameroon: \$3.8B

Cameroon is a Central African country, ranking 15th on our list of countries most in debt to China. The country owed China approximately \$3.8 billion as total external debt in 2022. ■



The writer is a student at UMT, Lahore.

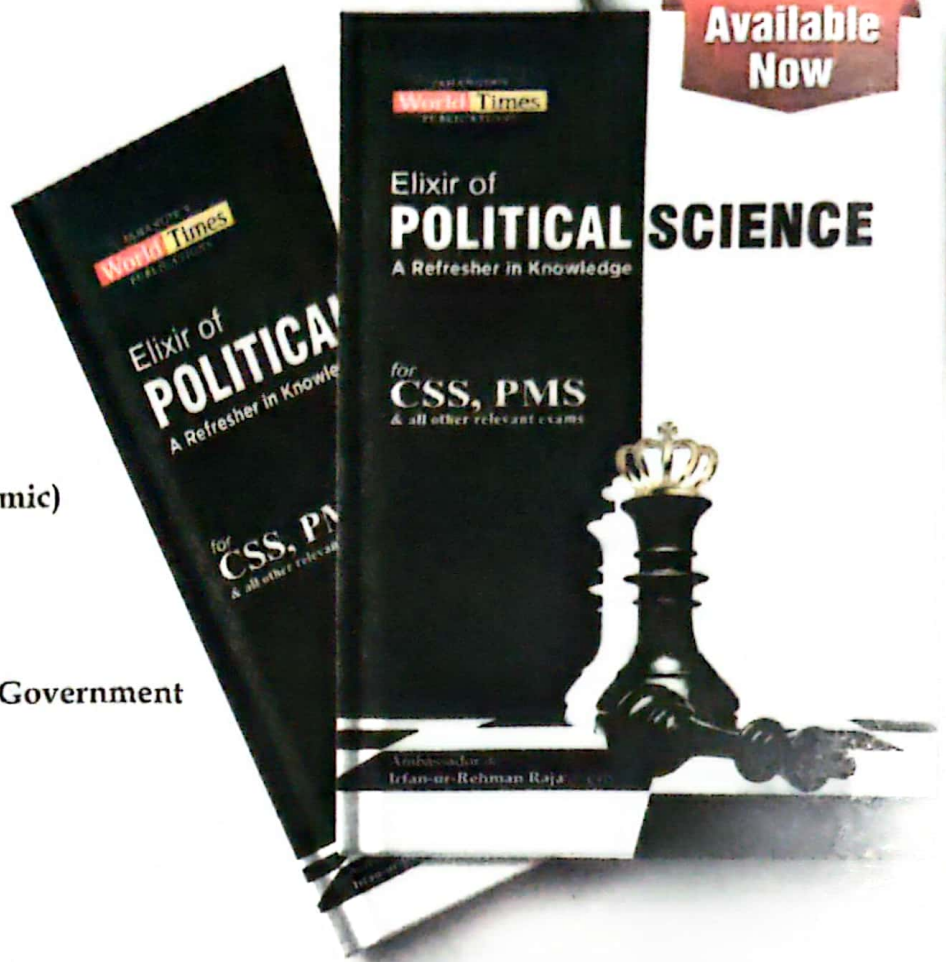
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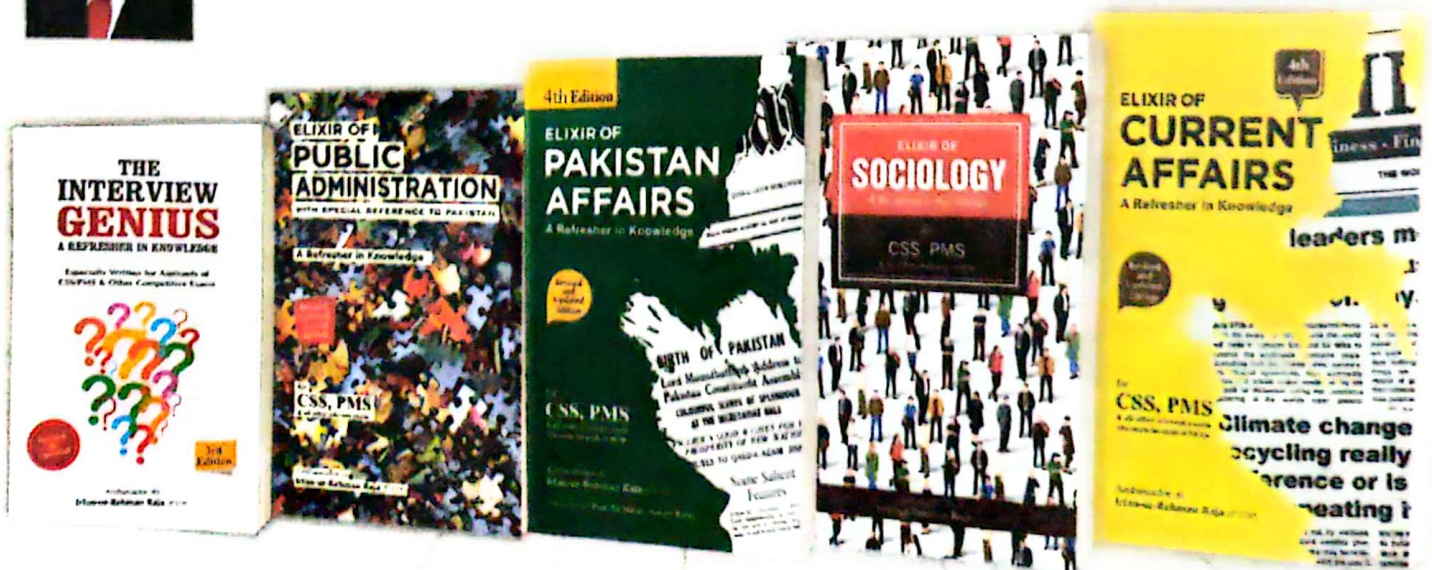
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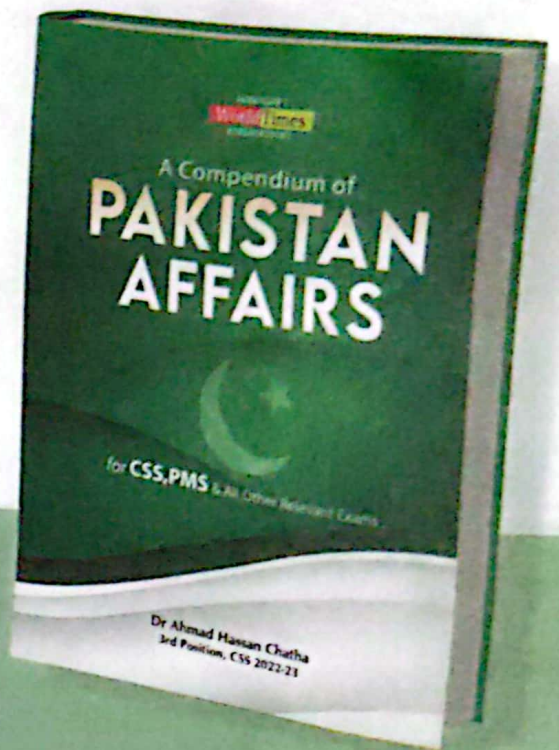
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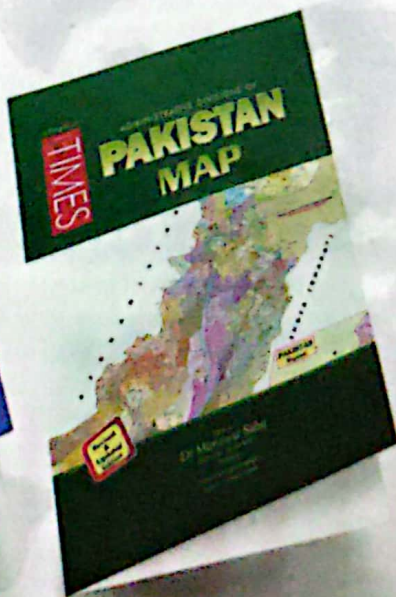
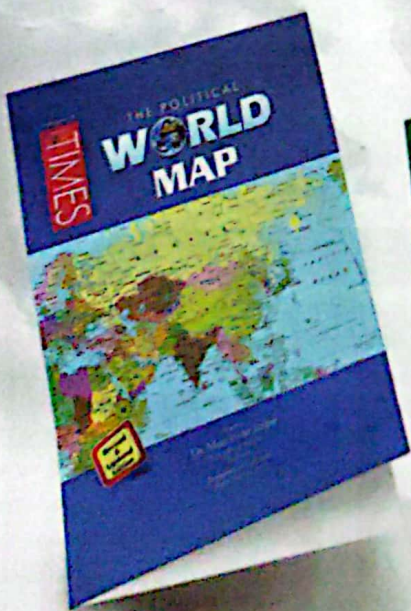
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3rd Position, CSS 2022-23

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June-July '24

NATIONAL



June 16: The federal government imposed a mandatory requirement for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, to be registered under the new "Civil Unmanned Aircraft Rules, 2024".

June 17: Mushahid Hussain Sayed became the first Pakistani to address the official International BRICS Forum, hosted by current Chair, Russia.

June 17: Pakistan started the process of joining the North-South International Transport Corridor after the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

June 19: King Charles III conferred the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) honour upon Asif Rangoonwala, a British-Pakistani philanthropist and entrepreneur.

June 20: Except for two power distribution companies, the government dissolved the boards of nine Discos and approved the names of new chairmen and members of Board of Directors.

June 20: The education ministry and Google announced a 'strategic collaboration' to improve access to education and support the development of a digital ecosystem for learning.

June 21: Minister of the International Department of the

M. Usman Butt

Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Jianchao visited Pakistan. He advised Pakistani political leadership to shun their differences as "internal stability is imperative for any nation to develop".

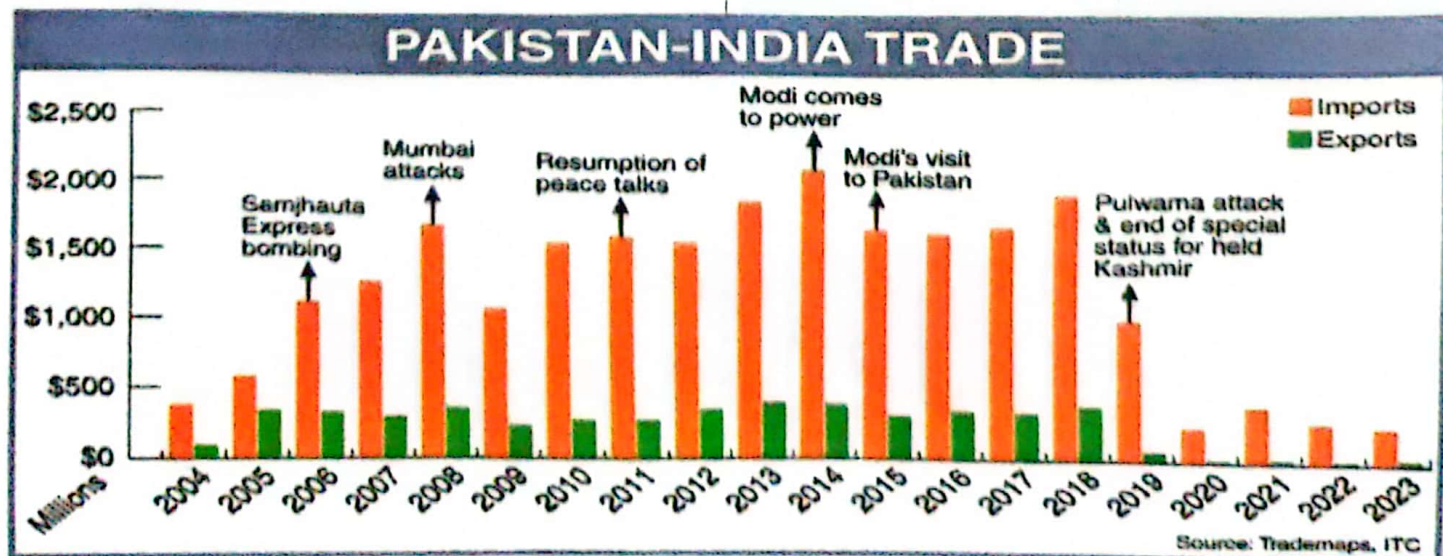
June 21: Almost half of the NAB's 179 mega corruption cases, the list of which was submitted before the Supreme Court in 2015, have been closed or disposed of and the beneficiaries include Mian Nawaz Sharif, Shahbaz Sharif, Pervez Ashraf, Chauhdry Shujaat Hussain, Firdous Ashiq Awan, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, Nawab Aslam Khan Raisani and others.

June 21: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) declared Balochistan cabinet's decision regarding wheat procurement illegal.

June 21: The World Bank's (WB) Board of Executive Directors approved \$535 million in financing for Pakistan to support two projects.

June 22: Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif (PMSS) approved the operation 'Azm-e-Istehkam' to integrate and synergise multiple lines of efforts to combat the menaces of extremism and terrorism in a comprehensive and decisive manner.

June 23: PTI-backed Zartaj Gul was appointed Parliamentarian.



In the headlines

- According to SIPRI's annual assessment, India, for the first time since nuclear tests by arch rivals in 1998, possesses more nuclear weapons than Pakistan in 2024. As of January 2024, Pakistan maintained its nuclear arsenal at around 170 warheads while India's inventory comprises approximately 172 nuclear weapons.
- Air pollution has become the second leading global risk factor for death, according to the fifth edition of the State of Global Air (SoGA) report published in partnership with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Owais Ahmad Laghari says electricity theft causes a loss of Rs600 billion annually to the country.
- Pakistan's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) incurred aggregate losses of Rs905 billion for the fiscal year 2022-23, marking a 23% increase from the previous fiscal year of 2021-22.
- According to a recent study, published in the journal Frontiers in Science, setting aside an additional 1.2 percent of the world's land as nature preserves would prevent the majority of predicted plant and animal extinctions and cost about \$263 billion.
- The World Meteorological Organization has said that heat now kills more people than any other extreme-weather hazard and has called for many more "tailored climate products and services" to protect people's health, including easy-to-use tools to find help.
- The number of days reaching a sizzling 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) in 20 of the world's largest capitals - from Delhi to Jakarta to Buenos Aires - has risen 52 percent over the past three decades. More than 300 million people live in the world's 20 most populous capital cities, where they are uniquely vulnerable to rising temperatures fueled by climate change, as asphalt and buildings absorb and retain heat. Delhi alone documented its longest and most severe heatwave in 74 years, registering 39 consecutive days with maximum temperatures at or above 40°C (104°F) from May 14 to June 21.
- Around 1,063 incidents of terrorism occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan during the last six months of this year. During this period, the Pakistan Army conducted 22,714 operations in which 111 soldiers and officers were martyred while 354 terrorists killed.
- Pakistan's trade deficit with China grew by 34 percent in the first eleven months of FY2024 as compared to the same period last year. Against the deficit of \$7.15 billion in July-May 2023, Pakistan recorded a deficit of \$9.6 billion in 11MFY2024. Financial experts see this deficit as a sign of the country's lack of preparedness at the domestic level, its limited exports basket, and its structural, economic, and policy-related issues.
- The Biden administration has sent to Israel large numbers of munitions, including more than 10,000 highly destructive 2,000-pound bombs and thousands of Hellfire missiles, since the start of the war in Gaza.

tary Leader of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) in the National Assembly (NA).

June 24: The Gilgit-Baltistan government unveiled the budget of Rs140.17 billion for the 2024-25, allocating Rs86.6bn for non-development expenditures and Rs34.60bn for development projects.

June 25: Three newly appointed judges, Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan, Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, and Shahid Bilal Hassan – took oath as Supreme Court judges.

June 25: PMSS nominated Ayesha Raza Farooq as Prime Minister's focal person for the anti-polio campaign.

June 25: The AJK government unveiled its deficit budget for the financial year 2024-25, amounting to Rs264.033 billion, with over 83% allocated for the recurring expenditures.

June 25: The US House of Representatives approved the "House Resolution 901" which urged an impartial probe into the claims of irregularities during the February 8 general elections in the country.

June 26: Cadet Afaq Mashwani of the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul was awarded the distinguished Major General Finley Award-2024 at the Royal Military College of Australia.

June 27: Mohammad Yasir Pirzada was appointed the Director General of Pakistan Sports Board (PSB).

June 27: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan reinstated a ban on government universities affiliating new colleges.

June 28: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) launched a ten-year cluster-based development plan for the growth of the SME sector.

June 28: The NA passed by majority vote the tax-laden Finance Bill 2024.

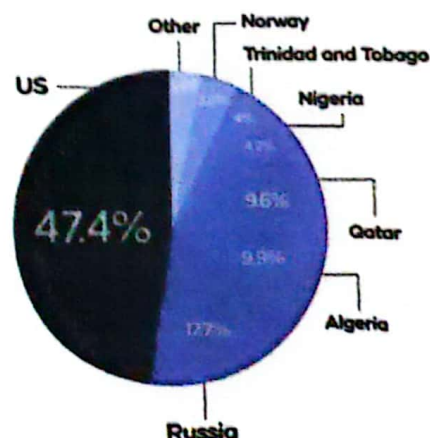
June 28: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 share recorded a growth of 89 per cent in the fiscal year 2024 (FY24), the highest in the last two decades.

June 28: The NA passed a resolution with a majority vote

EU IMPORTS ALMOST HALF OF ITS LNG FROM THE US

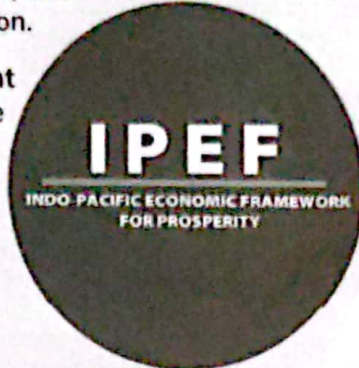
Share of trade in value, first quarter of 2024

Russia's share in EU import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) increased by 4.4% compared to same period last year.



ABOUT IPEF

- › It is a US-led initiative to strengthen economic partnerships among participating countries to enhance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.
- › The IPEF is not a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) but allows members to negotiate the parts they want to.
- › It has four main pillars:
 - Supply-chain resilience
 - Clean energy, decarbonisation, and infrastructure
 - Taxation & anti-corruption
 - Fair & resilient trade



termining the June 25 resolution adopted by the US House of Representatives seeking probe into the alleged irregularities in the Feb 8 elections 'an interference' in Pakistan's internal affairs.

June 29: The IHC declared that only one first information report (FIR) could be registered per incident, and only with the relevant police station.

June 29: The LHC directed the PM Office to instruct all the civil and military agencies, including the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), not to contact any member of the judiciary.

June 29: Pakistan players Hamza Khan and Sohail Adnan won the U-19 and U-13 titles, respectively, in the 31st Asian Junior Championship.

June 30: President Zardari gave assent to the Finance Bill 2024 under Article 75 of the Constitution.

July 01: The government of Pakistan appointed 48 prominent business figures as ambassadors-at-large and announced the issuance of official/gratis passports to these distinguished individuals.

July 01: Muhammad Shehryar Sultan was posted as new Chairman National Highway Authority (NHA).

July 01: In its opinion on PTI founder Imran Khan's prosecution and detention in the cipher and one of the two Toshakhana cases against him the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention held that the cases were 'without legal basis' and politically motivated to exclude him from competing in the political arena.

July 02: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended the appointment of Justice Aalia Neelum as Chief Justice of the LHC and Justice Shafi Siddiqui as that of the SHC.

July 02: Pakistan and Tajikistan exempted official passports from visa requirements.

July 02: Zia Rasheed, Pakistan's tallest man, who stood at over 8 feet tall, died aged 30 after years-long illness.

July 02: CM Sindh appointed ten special assistants and six more spokespersons for the provincial government.

July 02: Pakistan, New Zealand and Ireland secured automatic qualification for the 2026 ICC T20 World Cup, scheduled to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

July 02: Pakistan's Awais Ullah Munir and Mohammad Hasnain Akhtar won the Asian 6 Red and Asian 15 Red Under-21 Snooker Championships.

July 03: The government unveiled an ambitious plan to privatise 10 state-owned enterprises (SOEs) within the current financial year.

July 03: PMSS met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of States meeting.

July 03: The KP government barred public servants from attending overseas training at official expense.

July 03: The Pakistan Navy (PN) successfully tested the firing of land-to air FN-6 missile.

July 04: While addressing the 24th summit of the Council of Heads of State of SCO in Astana, PMSS asked the Afghan interim government to take effective measures to prevent the use of its soil for terrorism against any other state.



Sheila Jackson Lee

On July 19, Sheila Jackson Lee, the founder and co-chair of the Pakistan Caucus in the US Congress, died at the age of 74 after battling pancreatic cancer. The longest-serving congresswoman (she served in the House from 1995 to 2024), Ms. Lee was diagnosed with cancer in June this year and was undergoing treatment.

Ms. Lee was born in Queens, New York. A graduate of Yale University and the University of Virginia Law School, she worked as a lawyer in private practice and as a staff counsel for the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

She went on to serve in Houston's government as a member of the City Council and municipal judge before being elected to Congress, where she sat on the Judiciary, Homeland Security and Budget committees. She was the author and

lead sponsor of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, which established the first new federal holiday in the US in 38 years. She also pushed for the Sentencing Reform Act of 2015 as well as the George Floyd Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act.

She worked with successive Pakistani governments and prominent leaders, serving as a bridge between Pakistan and the United States. She paid several visits to Pakistan during times of crisis, including the 2005 earthquake and the 2022 floods, where she showed her empathy, solidarity and support to the people of Pakistan by visiting them in person. She was also conferred with the civilian award Hilal-e-Pakistan for her outstanding services to Pakistan.

July 04: The Senate passed a bill to empower the ECP to appoint retired judges of high courts as election tribunals.

July 04: Pakistan's young wrestler Hasan Ali Bholi secured a gold medal in the wrestling event of the Children's Asian Games.

July 04: Former Pakistan women's cricket captain Sana Mir was awarded lifetime membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) at Lord's.

July 05: During the 265th Corps Commanders' Conference at the GHQ, army's top brass noted with concern the unwarranted criticism by some quarters and deliberate misrepresentation of the vision "Azm-e-Istehkam" (Resolve for Stability), only for furthering their vested interests.

July 05: For the third year in a row, Pakistan secured the most European Union-funded Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters scholarships globally.

July 08: The federal cabinet authorized the ISI to intercept calls and message or trace a call in the interest of national security or in apprehension of a crime.

July 08: A court in Kenya awarded 10 million shillings (Rs21.7 million) in compensation to the widow of prominent Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif, who was shot dead by police at a roadblock in the Kenyan town of Kajiado nearly two years ago.

July 09: Terming it "unprecedented and historic", the World Bank said it disbursed \$2.25 billion, including policy loan of \$350 million, to Pakistan during the financial year ended on June 30, 2024.

July 10: The cabinet approved a one-year extension of 'Proof of Registration' (PoR) cards for 1.45 million Afghan refugees, legally residing in the country.

July 10: The Pakistan-Turkiye International Simulation Exercise (Sim-Ex) was conducted online at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to enhance cooperation and preparedness between the countries during disasters.

July 10: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, during his official visit to Russia, held meetings with Colonel General Alexander Fomin, Deputy Defence Minister, Aleksandr Venediktov, Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation and Colonel General SY Istrakov, Deputy Chief of General Staff

Smart City

A Smart City is a concept that refers to the use of technology, data and innovative solutions to improve the efficiency, sustainability and quality of life in urban areas.

Core Infrastructure Elements of a Smart City include:

- Adequate water supply;
- Assured electricity supply;
- Sanitation, including solid waste management;
- Efficient urban mobility and public transport;
- Affordable housing, especially for the poor;
- Robust IT connectivity and digitalization;
- Good governance, especially e-Governance and citizen participation;
- Sustainable environment;
- Safety and security of citizens, particularly women, children and the elderly; and
- Health and education.

Climate change impact on GDP

Employing long-term data on global economic growth and average annual temperature, a working paper quoted by The Economist finds that an additional 1°C of warming will lead to a 12pc fall in GDP

12%

Gender-based wage gaps

167 years

Indian women might have to wait another 167 years before they are paid as much as their male counterparts, according to Business Insider India, based on the Global Gender Gap Report 2024

Moving towards clean energy

For every \$1 spent on fossil fuels, \$1.70 is now spent on clean energy, according to the World Economic Forum's Fostering Effective Energy Transition report

\$1.7

of Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

July 10: The closing ceremony of Pakistan-United States Infantry Rifle Company Exercise 2024 was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre, Pabbi.

July 11: During the visit of Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev to Pakistan, both nations signed 15 agreements and MoUs for cooperation in diverse fields, with an aim to expand investment to \$2bn.

July 11: CM Punjab inaugurated the Chief Minister's Youth Initiative 'E-bike programme' by giving a symbolic key to a college student of Jampur.

July 11: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath to Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Justice Aalia Neelum.

July 11: The Sindh cabinet decided to protect the entire Karoonjhar Hills in Tharparkar as a cultural and heritage site.

July 12: The Supreme Court ruled that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was and is a political party that won general seats in the national and provincial assemblies in the February 8 elections thus entitled to reserved seats, declaring the ECP's decision of allocating reserved seats to the ruling coalition as unconstitutional and unlawful.

July 12: UN's World Population Prospects 2024, a key UN report,

Bastille Day

Bastille Day is celebrated in France as the beginning of the French Revolution in which the Ancien Regime of the absolutist Bourbon monarchy was overthrown in favour of Republicanism.

On July 14, 1789, the people of Paris broke the walls of Bastille Prison and freed the inmates. This was seen as the ultimate end of the power of monarchy. The Sans-culottes of France along with the peasants and fishermen as well as the women of Paris shaped the momentous events of this day.

Later, a National Assembly was set up which declared the Rights of Man and Citizen in August. It was here that we hear and see for the first-time the ideals of the French Republic- "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité" (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity).

placed Pakistan, whose current population is over 245 million, in the group of countries whose population is expected to increase through 2054 and could potentially peak in the second half of the century or later.

July 12: Arshad Majeed Mohmand was posted as Special Secretary, Power Division.

July 12: Pakistan and the IMF reached a three-year, \$7 billion aid package deal.

July 13: Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ), Islamabad, Muhammad Afzal Majoka, accepted pleas of Imran and Bushra Bibi, seeking annulment of their conviction in the Iddat Nikah case.

July 14: A renowned British-Pakistani entrepreneur Suleman Raza MBE was awarded the prestigious Freedom of the City of London.

July 14: Former Pakistan cricketer Billy Ibadulla passed away at the age of 88.

July 15: The envoys of Zimbabwe, Tajikistan, Rwanda, Argentina,

Myanmar, Cambodia and Botswana presented their diplomatic credentials to President Zardari.

July 15: PMSS appointed Ihsan Sadiq the director general of National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism Authority.

FBI reveals key facts about Trump shooter

• Thomas Matthew Crooks, 20, fired at Donald Trump

• His neighbours always saw him as a quiet young man

• Crooks was identified via DNA and facial recognition

• He was reportedly bullied in school



Full name: Kamala Devi Harris

Born: October 20, 1964, in Oakland, CA to immigrant parents from Chennai, India and Jamaica

Honors: Thurgood Marshall Award, honorary doctorates from the University of Southern California/Howard University

Up to 1989 Degrees in political science (Howard University) and law (Hastings College)

1990-2010 Prosecuting attorney/district attorney in Oakland and San Francisco

2011-2016 Attorney general of California

2017-2021 United States senator

2019 Harris launches presidential campaign but withdraws before the primaries

Since 2021 49th vice president of the United States

2024 Harris seeks Democratic nomination for the 2024 presidential race

Treaty of Versailles

- Treaty of Versailles was signed on 28th June 1919, at the Palace of Versailles, in Paris, France.
- It was one of the treaties that officially ended five years of conflict known as the World War I (1914-18).
- The Treaty mentioned the conditions of peace between Germany and the victorious Allies, led by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.
- The war guilt clause of the treaty forced Germany and other Central Powers (like Austria-Hungary) to take all the blame for World War I.
- This led to the loss of territories, reduction in military forces, and reparation payments to Allied powers by Germany.
- Disintegration of the German population was later used by Hitler to justify German aggression and expansion.
- It further posed severe risks to the entire European economy which led to the Great Depression of 1929.
- The treaty caused resentment among Germans who saw it as a dictated peace and is considered one of the reasons for World War II.
- Also, the treaty led to the formation of the League of Nations.

INTERNATIONAL

June 16: In its annual report, the WHO said there is a pressing need for new, innovative agents for serious infections and to replace those becoming ineffective due to widespread use.

June 16: A major two-day diplomatic summit on Ukraine concluded in Switzerland.

June 16: Gretchen Walsh shattered the 100m butterfly world record in the semi-finals at the US Olympic trials.

June 16: Albania's Nedim Bajrami scored the fastest goal ever scored at a European Championship, in just 23 seconds.

June 18: The Lunar Conference was hosted by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).

June 19: Canada listed Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist entity.

June 19: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was sworn in for a second full term.

June 19: Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a mutual defence agreement with North Korea's Kim Jong Un.

June 19: A court in Russia sentenced an American soldier arrested earlier this year to three years and nine months in prison on charges of stealing and threats of murder.

June 20: Three Nordic countries – Finland, Norway and Sweden – agreed to create an Arctic "military transport corridor" for channelling personnel and equipment to Finland amid tensions with its neighbour Russia.

June 20: Russia and Vietnam pledged to deepen ties during President Putin's state visit.

June 20: Donald Sutherland, one of Canada's most versatile and gifted actors, died at the age of 88.

June 20: Outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte clinched the race to become the next head of Nato.

June 20: A Stockholm court acquitted a former Syrian brigadier general Mohammed Hamo of war crimes charges.

June 21: Frank Duckworth, the pioneering statistician who co-created the Duckworth Lewis method adopted in cricket to revise targets in limited overs games truncated due to rain, died at the age of 84.

June 21: The US Supreme Court upheld a federal law prohibiting domestic abusers from possessing a firearm.

June 21: Armenia announced it was recognising the State of Palestine, the latest country to do so during the war in Gaza.

June 21: The 67th session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was held in Vienna.

June 21: The Czech parliament approved a law allowing postal voting for the first time.

June 23: Saudi Arabia announced that more than 1,300 faithful died during this year's Hajj pilgrimage.

June 23: Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg announced he will start transferring powers to his son Guillaume in October.

June 24: The United Nations published principles for fighting online disinformation.

June 24: The Italian city of Florence, a leftist bastion, elected its first woman mayor – Sara Funaro.

June 25: The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Russia's top army chief and ex-defence minister over strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure that constituted alleged war crimes.

June 25: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was released from a high-security British prison where he had been held for five years while he fought extradition to the United States.

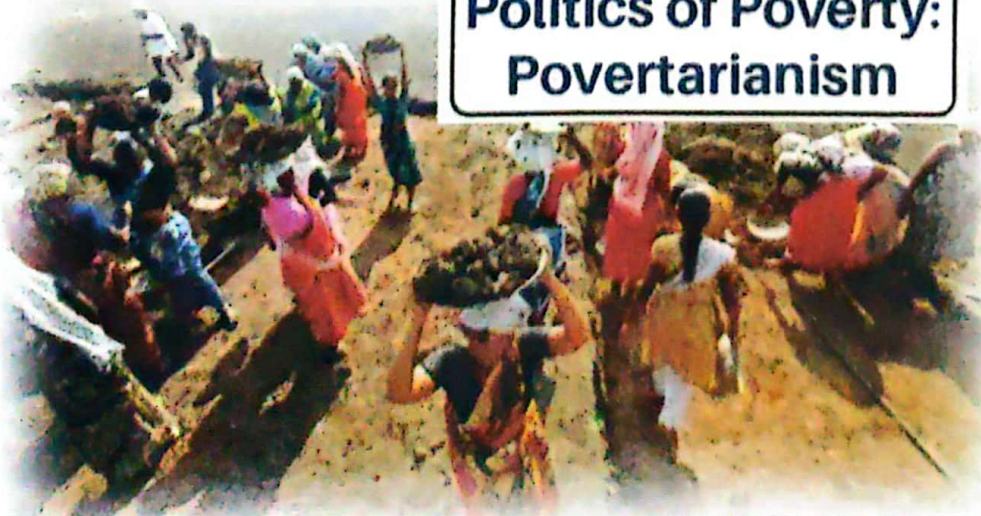
June 25: A Chinese probe carrying samples from the far side of the Moon returned to Earth.

June 26: The United States released its report on religious freedom whereby it offered rare criticism of close partner India while also voiced alarm over rising bigotry worldwide against both Jews and Muslims.

June 26: Nato's 32 nations appointed outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as

"Povertarianism" is a political approach that focuses on poverty reduction through targeted policies like social welfare, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for marginalized groups. It aims to address systemic inequalities and social injustices perpetuating poverty, advocating for resource redistribution and equitable access to improve living standards. Unlike other ideologies, povertarianism prioritizes poverty alleviation as a means to enhance individual well-being, foster economic growth, and promote social stability. This perspective emphasizes the importance of addressing poverty in policy discussions and governance strategies to create a more equitable society.

Politics of Poverty: Povertarianism



the alliance's next chief. He will take over from Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on October 1.

June 26: A landmark new citizenship law came into force in Germany with an explicit requirement for applicants to declare the state of Israel's right to exist.

June 26: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange reached Australia after he was freed by a United States court under a plea deal.

June 26: A court in New York sentenced former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernandez to 45 years in prison after he was convicted of trafficking hundreds of tons of cocaine into the United States.

June 27: Maldives police arrested two serving ministers for allegedly performing black magic on President Mohamed Muizzu.

June 27: Two Bolivian army leaders were arrested after soldiers and tanks took up position in front of government buildings in what President Luis Arce called an attempted coup.

June 27: Former Chinese defence minister Li Shangfu was expelled from the ruling Communist Party for causing "great damage to (its) cause".

June 27: Indian

author Arundhati Roy was awarded the PEN Pinter prize.

June 28: Financial Action Task Force (FATF) removed Türkiye from its 'grey list' of countries and added Monaco to a 'grey list' of countries subject to increased monitoring.

June 28: The US Supreme Court overturning a 1984 precedent – called "Chevron deference" – that had given deference to government agencies in interpreting laws they administer, handing a defeat to President Joe Biden's administration.

June 28: Prosecutors overstepped in charging January 6 rioters with obstruction for trying to prevent certification of the 2020 presidential election, the US Supreme Court ruled.

June 29: India beat South Africa to win the T20 World Cup 2024 title.

June 29: The IMF approved a \$2.2 billion disbursement to Ukraine for budget support.

June 30: The Arab League decided to remove Hezbollah from its blacklist.

June 30: Representatives of Afghanistan's Taliban

government attended talks in Doha with special envoys to the Central Asian country for the first time.





June 30: Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced the formation of a new EU parliamentary alliance with Austria's far-right party and the Czech centrist group of ex-premier Andrej Babis.

June 30: France's far right won the first round of legislative elections with the centrist forces of President Emmanuel Macron coming in only third.

July 01: The Finnish Parliament unanimously approved a defence pact with the United States.

July 01: The Lebanese army received an additional \$20 million from Qatar in support of Lebanese troops.

HIGHLIGHTS OF AMENDMENTS TO FINANCE BILL 2024

Product / Sector	Proposal in Finance Bill 2024	Final amendments
 Books & stationery	10pc Sales Tax across the board	Books exempted
 Builders & developers	No new taxes	10 to 12pc tax on taxable profits
 Corporate dairy farms	Exempt from additional taxes	Exemptions withdrawn
 Levy on diesel, gasoline	Rs60 per litre	Rs70 per litre

FED imposed on international air travel				
Economy and economy plus	Club, business and first class			
All destinations	North, Central, South America and environs	Middle East and Africa	Europe	Far East, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands
Rs12,500	Rs350,000	Rs105,000	Rs210,000	Rs210,000

July 01: The US Supreme Court ruled that Donald Trump enjoys some immunity from prosecution as a former president.

July 01: Russia-friendly Hungary took over EU's six-month rotating presidency from Belgium.

July 01: Ismail Kadare, Albania's greatest cultural monument, died aged 88.

July 01: North Korea switched the transmission of state TV broadcasts to a Russian satellite from a Chinese one.

July 01: Mauritania's incumbent President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani comfortably won re-election.

July 02: Meta Platforms announced to lift its blanket ban on the word 'shaheed'.

July 03: Canada's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, announced the appointment of Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan as the first woman to lead the G7 and Nato member nation's military.

July 03: A humble cave painting discovered in Indonesia emerged as the oldest known narrative artwork ever made

by human hands, dating back more than 51,000 years.

July 03: Israel approved its biggest land seizure in the occupied West Bank in more than three decades –12.7-square-kilometre of land in the Jordan Valley.

July 03: Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio enacted a law banning child marriage, with penalties including jail terms and fines.

July 05: In UK's general election, Labour Party won a landslide victory, bringing a crushing end to 14 years of Conservative rule.

July 06: Iran's reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian won a runoff presidential election against ultraconservative Saeed Jalili.

July 07: Lewis Hamilton won a record ninth British Grand Prix.

July 08: This year's was the hottest June on record across the globe, the EU's climate monitor said.

July 09: New UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer addressed the house for the first time, vowing to "put an end to a politics that has too often seemed self-serving and self-obsessed".

July 09: Lindsay Hoyle was re-elected unopposed as the speaker of the House of Commons.

July 09: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

July 09: Brazil put into effect a free trade agreement with the Palestinian Authority that has been waiting for ratification for more than decade.

July 10: NATO leaders started their summit in Washington to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the alliance.

July 11: Kenyan President William Ruto announced the dismissal of almost his entire cabinet.

July 12: England great James Anderson bowed out of international cricket. Anderson's tally of 704 Test wickets is the most taken by any fast bowler in the history of the format.

July 12: Finland's parliament passed a law granting border guards the power to block asylum seekers crossing from Russia.

July 12: Nepali Prime Minister and former Maoist guerrilla commander Pushpa Kamal Dahal lost a parliamentary vote of confidence.

July 12: The Israeli government's security cabinet approved a plan to extend compulsory military service for men to 36 months from the current 32 months.

July 13: Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic defeated Italy's Jasmine Paolini to win the Wimbledon women's title.

July 14: Nepal's president appointed Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli as prime minister for a fourth time.

July 14: Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-

GK Tidbits

1. The world's longest written constitution is that of: **India**
2. Primarily drafted by Thomas Jefferson, the United States adopted the Declaration of Independence on: **July 4, 1776**
3. The Italian city that is also known as the "Eternal City" is: **Rome**
4. The country that has the longest coastline in the world is: **Canada (202,080 km)**
5. The first literary work ever written in Urdu prose is: **Sabras by Mulla Vajhi (1635)**
6. Google introduced its AI-powered chatbot, Gemini, in: **December 2023**
7. The number of judges in the International Criminal Court is: **18**
8. Bamako is the capital of: **Mali**
9. The current political regime in France is called: **The Fifth Republic**
10. In France, a situation where the President and the PM belong to different political parties is called: **Cohabitation**
11. The Emergency in India was a

- 21-month period between: **1975 & 1977**
12. Dagestan is a republic in North Caucasus of: **Russia**
13. The river that flows through the heart of Paris is: **Seine River**
14. The longest river of France is: **Loire River**
15. The International Sugar Organization is based in: **London**
16. India and Pakistan signed the Indus Waters Treaty on: **Sept. 19, 1960**
17. The Hambledon Club, the birthplace of modern cricket, was founded in: **1760s**
18. The first recorded match of cricket took place in: **1646**
19. The first international cricket match was played between the United States and Canada in: **1844**
20. The International Yoga Day is observed on: **June 21**
21. Yerevan is the capital of: **Armenia**
22. The world's longest written constitution is that of: **India**
23. The Partition of Bengal was

- annulled in: **1911**
24. The city also known as the Manchester of Pakistan is: **Faisalabad**
25. The current First Lady of Pakistan is: **Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari**
26. Luxembourg has been headed by the family dynasty since: **1890**
27. The old name of Attock is: **Campbellpur**
28. The first man-made satellite launched by the Soviet Union in 1957 was named: **Sputnik 1**
29. The largest desert in the world is: **Antarctica**
30. The time it takes for the sun's light to reach Earth is: **8 seconds**
31. The current president of International Police Organisation Pakistan is: **Dr Maqsood Ahmed**
32. The Duckworth Lewis method was adopted by the International Cricket Council in: **1999**
33. Celsius and Fahrenheit scales equal at: **-40 degrees**
34. Charles F. Richter played a major role in the field of:

Maktoum appointed his son, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the emirate's crown prince, as defence minister of the United Arab Emirates.

July 14: Carlos Alcaraz overpowered seven-time champion Novak Djokovic to retain his Wimbledon title.

July 14: China and Russia conducted a joint naval patrol in the northern and western Pacific.

July 14: Spain won Euro 2024 title with a 2-1 victory over England.

July 14: Republican candidate and former president Donald Trump was hit in the ear in an assassination attempt by a gunman at a campaign rally.

July 15: The European Union announced sanctions on five Israelis -- including those termed "extremist settlers" -- and three organisations for abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank.

July 15: Donald Trump won formal nomination as the Republican presidential

A Timeline of Assassination Attempts Against U.S. Presidents

(Former) U.S. presidents injured or killed in assassination attempts

Abraham Lincoln	April 14, 1865 Shot by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington. Died April 15.	Fatal
James A. Garfield	July 2, 1881 Shot by Charles Guiteau at a train station in Washington, D.C. Died September 19.	Fatal
William McKinley	September 6, 1901 Shot by Leon Czolgosz at the Temple of Music in Buffalo, New York. Died September 14.	Fatal
Theodore Roosevelt	October 14, 1912 Shot by John Schrank while campaigning in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Survived with a bullet lodged in his chest.	Non-fatal
John F. Kennedy	November 22, 1963 Fatally shot by Lee Harvey Oswald during a motorcade in Dallas, Texas.	Fatal
Ronald Reagan	March 30, 1981 Shot by John Hinckley Jr. at the Washington Hilton in D.C. Survived seriously wounded.	Non-fatal
Donald J. Trump	July 13, 2024 Shot by Thomas Matthew Crooks at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. Survived with minor injury to his ear.	Non-fatal

In addition to these cases, there have been numerous failed assassination plots/ attempts that left the targeted president unharmed.

GK Tidbits

Seismology

35. The High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) is developed by: **The United States**

36. The games that were previously called 'British Empire Games' are: **Commonwealth Games**

37. The world's fastest bird and the fastest animal is: **Peregrine falcon**

38. The anthem of the European Union is: **Ode to Joy**

39. The Council of Europe adopted Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" theme as its anthem in: **1972**

40. A complete set of DNA that contains all of the genes of an organism is called: **Genome**

41. Ethyl alcohol is also known as: **Ethanol**

42. International Asteroid Day is observed on: **June 30**

43. Asteroids are also referred to as: **Minor planets**

44. Nouakchott is the capital of: **Mauritania**

45. The 2026 ICC T20 World Cup will be co-hosted by India and: **Sri Lanka**

46. Pakistan's tallest man Zia Rasheed belonged to: **Vehari**

47. The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is headquartered in: **Kingston, Jamaica**

48. The 'Law of the Sea Treaty', formally known as the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted in: **1982**

49. The Simla Agreement between Pakistan and India was signed on: **2 July 1972**

50. Epilepsy is a disorder of: **Central nervous system**

51. The newest member of the SCO is: **Belarus**

52. The magazine that Syed Sulaiman Nadvi regularly published was: **Ma'arif**

53. The barrage that irrigates around 80% of all agricultural land in the Sindh is: **Sukkur Barrage**

54. The Sukkur Barrage was commissioned in: **1932**

55. The first African American to win an Oscar was: **Hattie McDaniel**

56. The United States celebrates

its Independence Day on: **July 4**

57. The first army officer from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who was awarded the prestigious Nishan-e-Haider was: **Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed**

58. "Chokers" is the nickname of the cricket team of: **South Africa**

59. NASA's CHAPEA project is a crucial step in preparing for human exploration of: **Mars**

60. The first Pakistani scientist who has been granted Saudi citizenship is: **Dr. Mehmood Khan**

61. Regions in spacetime where gravity is so intense that nothing, not even light, can escape are: **Black Holes**

62. The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle is the highest civilian honour of: **Russia**

63. The Pakistan Technology Evaluation Satellite (PakTES-1A) was launched on: **July 9, 2018**

64. The number of women MPs in the new House of Commons is: **263**

65. The number of NATO member states currently is: **32**

candidate and picked Senator J.D. Vance as his running mate.

July 15: Armenia hosted joint military drills with US troops.

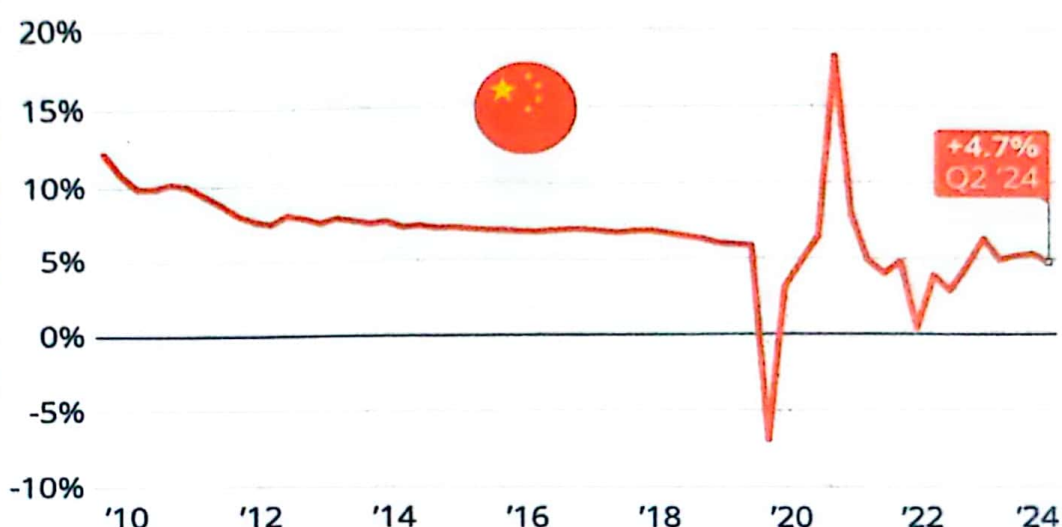
July 15: Top officials from Britain and the EU held their first face-to-face talks in Brussels as the new Labour government looks to "reset" ties after Brexit.

July 15: Argentina beat Colombia to win a record 16th Copa America title.

July 15: In a historic ceremony at the Royal Courts of Justice, MP Shabana Mahmood was sworn in as the first female Muslim Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom.

China's GDP Growth Misses Forecasts

Quarterly real GDP growth of China (year-over-year; seasonally adjusted)



GK Tidbits

66. NATO's outgoing secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, belongs to: **Norway**

67. The writer of the famous novel "The Godfather" was: **Mario Puzo**

68. The classic colour of the ruby is: **Red**

69. The gemstone that is said to be "Born of Fire" is: **Peridot**

70. Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, is located in: **Tanzania**

71. The number of US presidents who were assassinated while in office is: **Four**

72. Abraham Lincoln was killed in 1865 by John Wilkes Booth in: **Washington**

73. The first poet who composed the sorrowful tale of Sahiban and Mirza was: **Pilu**

74. Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) was established in: **1920**

75. France's annual Bastille Day is celebrated on: **July 14**

76. The first Pakistan Educational Conference was held in 1947 in: **Karachi**

77. The gases used in welding

works are Oxygen and: **Acetylene**

78. The snail-shaped tube in the inner ear where sound vibrations are converted into nerve impulses by the organ of Corti is: **Cochlea**

79. Quaid-i-Azam trophy is associated with: **Cricket**

80. The first political party that was banned in Pakistan was: **Communist Party of Pakistan (July 1954)**

81. Cyril Ramaphosa is the president of: **South Africa**

82. World Youth Skills Day is celebrated every year on: **July 15**

83. Mare Tranquillitatis or Sea of Tranquility is located on: **Moon**

84. Satadree, Zaradros and Langchen Khambab are the names of the river: **Sutlej**

85. UNEP was established following the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in: **1972**

86. International Astronomical Union (IAU) was founded in: **1919**

87. Neptune, the eighth planet in our solar system, was discovered

in: **1846**

88. Neptune is named after the Roman god of the: **Sea**

89. Youngest president of USA was: **J.F. Kennedy**

90. Dysgraphia is the impaired ability to learn to: **Write**

91. Entomology is the study of: **Insects**

92. The Silk Letter Movement was uncovered after the capture of letters from: **Ubaiddullah Sindhi**

93. Goitre is the abnormal enlargement of: **Thyroid gland**

94. Central nervous system consists of brain and: **Spinal cord**

95. Badshahi Mosque in Lahore was built by: **Aurangzeb**

96. Sui gas was discovered in Pakistan in: **1952**

97. The district of Punjab in which Katas Raj Temple is located is: **Chakwal**

98. The Wealth of Nations was written by: **Adam Smith**

99. Statue of Liberty was given to the USA by: **France**

100. The world's largest gulf is: **The Gulf of Mexico**

MCQs / NATIONAL

1. On June 17, Mushahid Hussain Sayed became the _____ Pakistani to address the official International BRICS Forum.

- (a) First (b) Second
(c) Third (d) None of these

2. On June 17, Pakistan started the process of joining the North-South International Transport Corridor after the invitation of _____ President.

- (a) Turkish (b) Russian
(c) Chinese (d) None of these

3. On June 20, the education ministry and _____ announced a 'strategic collaboration' to improve access to education and support the development of a digital ecosystem for learning.

- (a) Google (b) Microsoft
(c) Meta (d) None of these

4. On _____, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif approved the operation 'Azm-e-Istehkam' to combat the menaces of extremism and terrorism in a comprehensive and decisive manner.

- (a) June 22 (b) June 24
(c) June 26 (d) None of these

5. On June 23, PTI-backed _____ was appointed Parliamentary Leader of the Sunni Ittehad Council in the National Assembly.

- (a) Gohar Khan (b) Zartaj Gul
(c) Waqas Akram (d) None of these

6. On June 25, three newly appointed judges – Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan, Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, and _____ – took oath as Supreme Court judges.

- (a) Mazhar Ali Naqvi
(b) Tariq Mehmood
(c) Shahid Bilal Hassan
(d) None of these

7. On June 25, Ayesha Raza Farooq was appointed Prime Minister's focal person for _____ campaign.

- (a) Anti-Polio (b) Anti-Smog
(c) Climate Change (d) None of these

8. The US House of Representatives approved the "House Resolution 901" on _____.

- (a) June 25 (b) June 27
(c) June 28 (d) None of these

9. On June 27, Mohammad Yasir Pirzada was appointed the _____ of Pakistan Sports Board.

- (a) Chairman (b) President
(c) Director General (d) None of these

10. The National Assembly passed the Finance Bill 2024 on _____.

- (a) June 26 (b) June 28
(c) June 30 (d) None of these

11. On June 29, Pakistan players Hamza Khan and _____ won the U-19 and U-13 titles, respectively, in the 31st Asian Junior Championship.

- (a) Sohail Adnan (b) Atlas Khan
(c) Ali Sajjad (d) None of these

12. The current Chairman of the National Highway Authority is _____.

- (a) Shehryar Sultan (b) Razaqat Dogar
(c) Mohsin Butt (d) None of these

13. On July 02, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended the appointment of Justice Aalia Neelum as Chief Justice of the _____ High Court.

- (a) Lahore (b) Islamabad
(c) Sindh (d) None of these

14. On July 02, Justice Shafi Siddiqui was appointed the Chief Justice of the _____ High Court.

- (a) Lahore (b) Balochistan
(c) Sindh (d) None of these

15. On July 02, Pakistan and _____ exempted official passports from visa requirements.

- (a) Tajikistan (b) Russia
(c) Kazakhstan (d) None of these

16. On July 02, Pakistan's tallest man _____ (over 8 feet tall) died.

- (a) Zia Rasheed (b) Ammar Rashid
(c) Sultan Khan (d) None of these

17. On July 03, the _____ government barred public servants from attending overseas training at official expense.

- (a) Balochistan (b) KP
(c) Punjab (d) None of these

18. On July 03, the Pakistan _____ successfully tested the firing of land-to air FN-6 missile.

- (a) Army (b) Navy
(c) Air Force (d) None of these

19. PM Shahbaz Sharif addressed the 24th summit of the Council of Heads of State of SCO on _____.

- (a) July 02 (b) July 04
(c) July 08 (d) None of these

20. On July 04, former Pakistan women's cricket captain _____ was awarded lifetime membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord's.

- (a) Nida Dar (b) Sana Mir
(c) Bisma Maroof (d) None of these

21. Pakistan secured the most _____-funded Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters scholarships globally, for the third year in a row.

- (a) EU (b) UNICEF
(c) ADB (d) None of these

22. On July 08, the federal cabinet authorised the _____ to intercept calls and message or trace a call in the interest of national security.

- (a) MI (b) IB
(c) ISI (d) None of these

23. The World Bank disbursed _____ to Pakistan during the FY 2023-24.

- (a) \$2.00 billion (b) \$2.25 billion
(c) \$3.25 billion (d) None of these

24. On July 10, the Pakistan-_____ International Simulation Exercise was conducted online.

- (a) Sri Lanka (b) Turkiye
(c) China (d) None of these

25. The current Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee is _____.

- (a) Sahir Shamshad Mirza
(b) Ahmad Sharif Chaudhary
(c) Bilal Akbar (d) None of these

26. On July 10, the closing ceremony of Pak-US Infantry Rifle Company Exercise 2024 was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre in _____.

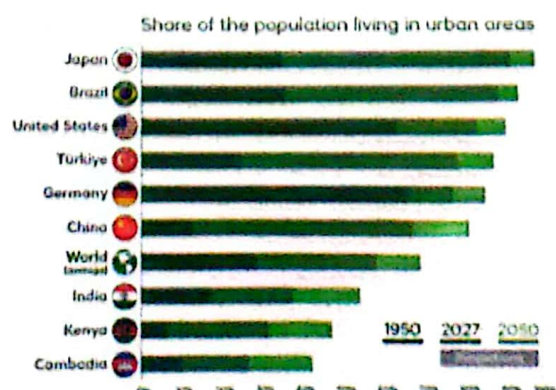
- (a) Bannu (b) Panjgur
(c) Pabbi (d) None of these

27. On _____, Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath to Chief Justice of LHC Justice Aalia Neelum.

- (a) July 11 (b) July 12
(c) July 13 (d) None of these

28. On July 11, the Sindh cabinet decided to protect the entire Karoonjhar Hills in _____ as a cultural and heritage site.

Nearly 70% of the world to live in urban areas by 2050



- (a) Larkana (b) Hyderabad
(c) **Tharparkar** (d) None of these

29. The Supreme Court ruled on _____ that PTI was and is a political party that won general seats in the national and provincial assemblies in the Feb. 8 elections thus entitled to reserved seats.

- (a) **July 12** (b) July 13
(c) July 14 (d) None of these

30. On July 12, Pakistan and the IMF reached a three-year, _____ aid package deal.

- (a) \$6 billion (b) **\$7 billion**
(c) \$5 billion (d) None of these

31. On _____, former Pakistan cricketer Billy Ibadulla passed away.

- (a) July 11 (b) July 13
(c) **July 14** (d) None of these

32. On July 15, _____ was appointed the director general of National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism Authority.

- (a) Shahryar Khan (b) Asim Mehmood
(c) **Ihsan Sadiq** (d) None of these

33. The highest temperature ever recorded in Pakistan was in 2017 at 54°C in _____.

- (a) Matiari (b) Sibbi
(c) **Turbat** (d) None of these

34.1. The Urdu Defence Association was founded in _____.

- (a) 1867 (b) 1885
(c) **1900** (d) None of these

35. Benazir Bhutto's second government was dissolved by _____.

- (a) **Farooq Laghari** (b) GI Khan
(c) Rafiq Tarar (d) None of these

36. According to the 1973 constitution, the minimum age limit for the Prime minister of Pakistan is _____.

- (a) 20 years (b) 24 years
(c) **25 years** (d) None of these

37. The term of office of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan is _____.

- (a) Two years (b) **Three years**
(c) Six years (d) None of these

38. Faraizi Movement was started by _____.

- (a) Shah Waliullah (b) Ashraf Ali Thanvi
(c) **Haji Shariatullah** (d) None of these

39. Syed Ahmad Shaheed was martyred on May 6, 1831, at _____.

- (a) Mirpur (b) Rawlakot
(c) **Balakot** (d) None of these

40. The founder of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College was _____.

- (a) Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk
(b) **Sir Syed Ahmed Khan**
(c) Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk
(d) None of these

INTERNATIONAL

1. The recent two-day diplomatic summit on Ukraine was held in _____.

- (a) **Switzerland** (b) USA
(c) Finland (d) None of these

2. On June 16, _____ Nedim Bajrami scored the fastest goal ever scored at European Championship, in just 23 seconds.

- (a) Belgium's (b) **Albania's**
(c) France's (d) None of these

3. On June 19, Russia signed a mutual defence agreement with _____.

- (a) Vietnam (b) China
(c) **North Korea** (d) None of these

4. On June 20, three Nordic countries – Finland, Norway and _____ – agreed to create an Arctic "military transport corridor".

- (a) Iceland (b) Norway
(c) **Sweden** (d) None of these

5. On June 20, outgoing _____ Prime Minister Mark Rutte clinched the race to become the next head of Nato.

- (a) French (b) Greek
(c) **Dutch** (d) None of these

6. On _____, Frank Duckworth, who co-created the Duckworth Lewis method adopted in cricket, died.

- (a) June 18 (b) June 20
(c) **June 21** (d) None of these

7. On June 21, the 67th session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was

held in _____.

- (a) **Vienna** (b) Nairobi
(c) Brussels (d) None of these

8. The United Nations published principles for fighting online disinformation on _____.

- (a) June 22 (b) **June 24**
(c) June 26 (d) None of these

9. On June 25, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was released from a high-security _____ prison.

- (a) **British** (b) American
(c) Ecuadorian (d) None of these

10. NATO's current Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will be replaced on _____.

- (a) Sept. 30, 2024 (b) **Oct. 1, 2024**
(c) Nov. 1, 2024 (d) None of these

11. On June 26, a US court sentenced former _____ president Juan Orlando Hernandez to 45 years in prison.

- (a) Ecuadorian (b) Mexican
(c) **Honduran** (d) None of these

12. On June 27, Indian author Arundhati Roy was awarded the PEN Pinter prize which was launched in 2009 in honour of the late Nobel Literature Prize-winning playwright _____.

- (a) Claude Simon (b) David Cohen
(c) **Harold Pinter** (d) None of these

13. On June 28, Financial Action Task Force removed _____ from its 'grey list' of countries

- (a) **Turkiye** (b) Iran
(c) India (d) None of these

14. On June 28, the FATF added _____ to a 'grey list' of countries subject to increased monitoring.

- (a) Iran (b) **Monaco**
(c) Kenya (d) None of these

15. On June 29, India beat _____ to win the T20 World Cup 2024 title.

- (a) Australia (b) **South Africa**
(c) England (d) None of these

16. On July 01, the _____ Parliament unanimously approved a defence pact with the United States.

- (a) **Finnish** (b) Danish
(c) Swede (d) None of these

17. On July 01, _____ took over EU's six-month rotating presidency from Belgium.

- (a) Belgium (b) Latvia
(c) **Hungary** (d) None of these

18. On July 01, Ismail Kadare, _____ greatest cultural monument, died aged 88.

- (a) Turkiye's (b) **Albania's**

PARIS 2024



MASCOT

Olympic Phryge

The Olympic Phryge takes the shape and form of a traditional Phrygian cap. The name and design were chosen as symbols of freedom and to represent allegorical figures of the French republic.



(c) Lebanon's (d) None of these

19. On July 02, _____ announced to lift its blanket ban on the word 'shaheed'.

- (a) ChatGPT (c) Meta
(b) Google (d) None of these

20. Lt. Gen. Jennie Carignan, the first woman to lead a G7 and Nato member nation's military, is from _____.

- (a) France (b) Italy
(c) Canada (d) None of these

21. On July 03, a cave painting discovered in _____ emerged as the oldest known narrative artwork ever made by human hands.

- (a) Israel (b) Malaysia
(c) Indonesia (d) None of these

22. On July 05, Labour Party won a landslide victory in UK's general election bringing a crushing end to _____ years of Conservative rule.

- (a) 12 (b) 14
(c) 16 (d) None of these

23. On _____, Masoud Pezeshkian won the presidential election in Iran.

- (a) July 02 (b) July 04
(c) July 06 (d) None of these

24. On July 09, new _____ Prime Minister Keir Starmer addressed the lower house of the country's parliament.

- (a) UK's (b) Poland's
(c) France's (d) None of these

25. On July 09, _____ was re-elected unopposed as the speaker of the House of Commons.

- (a) Lindsay Hoyle (b) Edward Leigh
(c) Thomas Alva (d) None of these

26. On July 09, _____ put into effect a free trade agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

- (a) Germany (b) Brazil
(c) Iceland (d) None of these

27. On July 10, NATO leaders started their summit in _____ to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the alliance.

- (a) Brussels (b) Washington
(c) Rome (d) None of these

28. William Ruto is the president of _____.

- (a) Italy (b) Poland
(c) Kenya (d) None of these

29. On July 12, _____ great James Anderson bowed out of international cricket.

- (a) Australia (b) South Africa
(c) England (d) None of these

30. The record for most test wickets (704) taken by any fast bowler in the history of the format is held by _____.

- (a) Wasim Akram (b) Kapil Dev
(c) James Anderson (d) None of these

31. On July 12, _____ parliament passed a law granting border guards the power to block asylum seekers crossing from Russia.

- (a) Finland's (b) Estonia
(c) Georgia (d) None of these

32. On July 13, Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic defeated _____ Jasmine Paolini to win the Wimbledon women's title.

- (a) Germany's (b) Italy's
(c) Spain's (d) None of these

33. On July 14, _____ president appointed Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli

- (c) July 14 (d) None of these

37. On July 15, Donald Trump picked Senator _____ as his running mate.

- (a) Cornel West (b) Jill Stein
(c) J.D. Vance (d) None of these

38. On July 15, _____ hosted joint military drills with US troops.

- (a) Finland (b) Poland
(c) Armenia (d) None of these

39. On July 15, _____ beat Colombia to win a record 16th Copa America title.

- (a) Brazil (b) Argentina
(c) Uruguay (d) None of these

40. On July 15, _____ was sworn in as the first female Muslim Lord

CrowdStrike: Company at center of global IT outage

CROWDSTRIKE



CrowdStrike's CEO
George Kurtz



The software company headquartered in Austin, Texas



Market capitalization of
\$85.3 billion



With
8,500 employees



The company has investments in many countries, especially in India, Singapore and Israel

Products offered by CrowdStrike's



Offers several products for detecting malware



Aims to protect companies online, stop data breaches, ransomware and cyberattacks



Endpoints and cloud workloads strive to secure identity and data

The firm was involved in the analysis and the removal of hacks from the 2016 cyberattack on US government agencies, known as the Democratic National Committee (DNC) cyberattacks, perpetrated by Russian hacker groups

Some shareholders of the company

BlackRock Vanguard

GEODE STATE STREET

Morgan Stanley

as prime minister of the country for a fourth time.

- (a) Nepal's (b) Bhutan's
(c) Sri Lanka's (d) None of these

34. On July 14, Carlos Alcaraz overpowered seven-time champion _____ to retain his Wimbledon title.

- (a) Rafael Nadal (b) Novak Djokovic
(c) Andy Murray (d) None of these

35. On July 14, _____ won Euro 2024 title with a 2-1 victory over England.

- (a) France (b) Croatia
(c) Spain (d) None of these

36. On _____, Republican candidate and former president Donald Trump was hit in the ear in an assassination attempt.

- (a) July 10 (b) July 12

Chancellor of the United Kingdom.

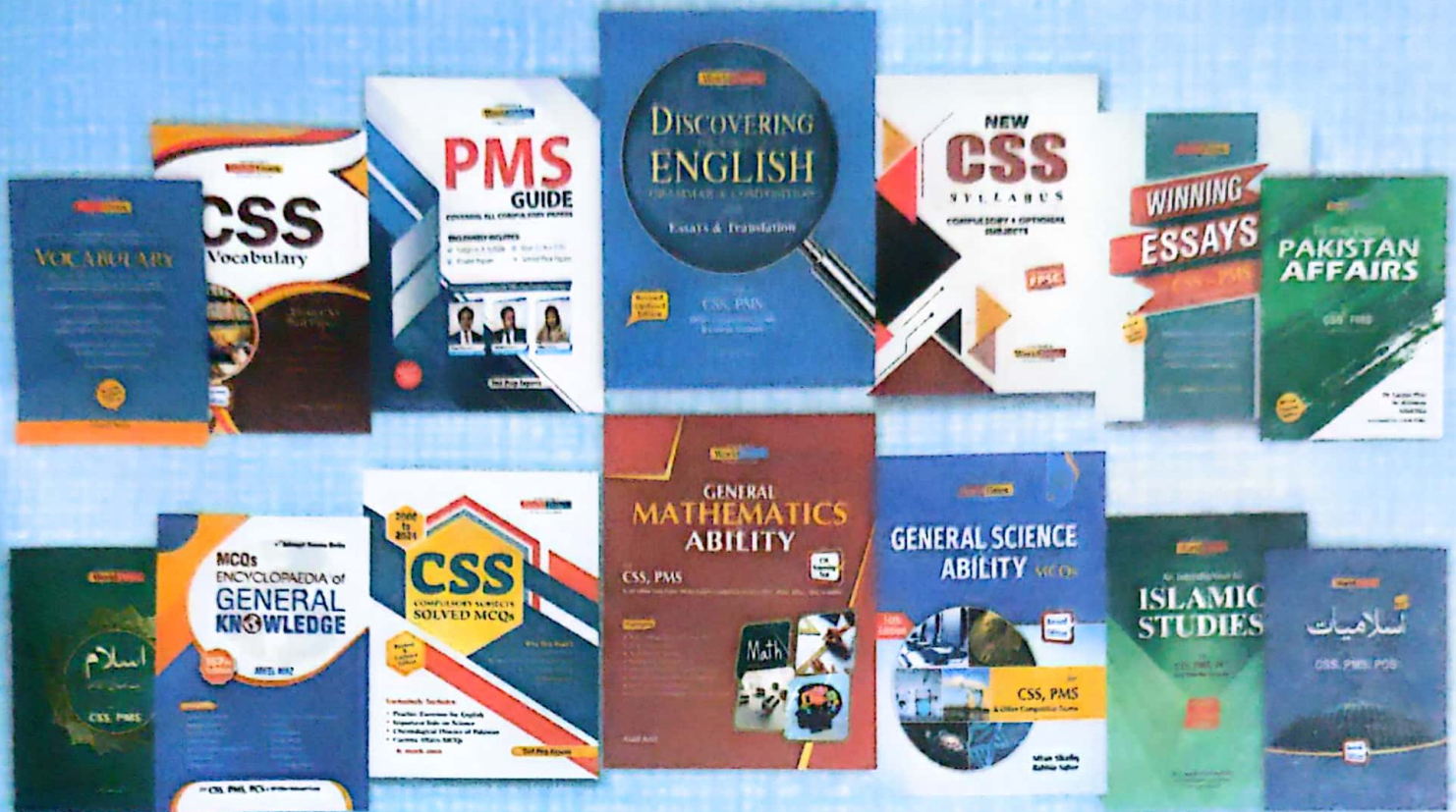
- (a) Alina Khan (b) Sayeeda Warsi
(c) Shabana Mahmood
(d) None of these

Netanyahu calls for "Abraham Alliance" in US Congress address

- Wants an anti-Iran pact
- Envisions the alliance as an extension of Abraham Accords
- Says he wants "total victory" in Gaza



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